University of Alberta

Exploring the Possibilities of CLT in the Thai Context

by
Thooptong Kwangsawad

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore factors which need to be considered when adapting CLT to the Thai context. More specifically, it identifies factors which influenced change in teachers' and students' attitudes towards change in classroom practice.

In this action research study the researcher collaborated with the four EFL teachers and the 250 junior high school students enrolled in grades 7/1, 7/3, 8/1, 8/3, 9/1, 9/2 and 9/4 at the laboratory school attached to Mahasarakham University, Thailand. This research project drew upon six sources of data to explore how CLT was adapted in EFL classrooms in Thailand. To collect these data, the four EFL teachers, 250 students, and I engaged in a variety of collaborative activities that including: conversations with students, conversations with teachers, researcher's journal, students' journals, teachers' journals, and the observations of the researcher. To translate CLT from theory to practice I used Bilash's Second Language Instructional Model (B-SLIM), Bilash's criteria for communicative activities (BCCA), and Gardner's multiple intelligences.

Factors which seemed to have positively influenced teachers' attitudes towards changes in classroom practice from my perspective as a participant-observer-facilitator of this action research project are: applying B-SLIM in the classroom; opportunities for guided practice; sharing knowledge and ideas; learning to critique; overturning doubt.

Factors which influenced students' attitudes towards changes in classroom practice include: variety of activities; active participation; responding to

their ideas; learner-teacher relationship; student input and the role of grammar; kinesthetic learning; and value of Pop-Rock Music, B-SLIM, and test anxiety.

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Introduction

My Reflective Learning English Stories

The Promise of a Hill Tribe Girl

My life began in 1958 when I was born into a family of 10 siblings and my two parents. My parents were farmers whose farm was located in the province of Kalasin which is located in a valley 1,000 kilometres northeast of Bangkok. The valley is near the border with Laos. The plain people of this area are referred to as "Pu Tai" which literally translated means one of the "hill tribe".

My formal education began in grade 1 at the age of 7. Four years later at the age of 11, I completed grade 4 – junior primary school. During my years of junior primary school I attended a school that was in the area of my home. For grade 5 and beyond I attended a senior primary school which was located four kilometres from my village. Because there were no school busses we had to walk that distance and return each and every school day. This we did in our bare feet. That walk was most relaxing because as we walked we could pick either wild flowers or fruit growing along the path. It also permitted us to talk, argue, tease, discuss our lessons, and laugh. Sometimes we fought with each other but we did not remain antagonists for long.

Most of the people of my village, with the exception of the school teachers and the police officers, walked in their bare feet. Although most of the villagers could afford shoes there was no place in the village where shoes could be purchased. Shoe stores or supermarkets did not exist. Because of this we were not trademark conscious. Trade names such as Nike, Adidas, or Reebok meant

nothing to us until we left the village later in life. Personally, I love my feet because they are my major mode of transportation and will take me anywhere I want to go.

When I entered senior primary school from junior primary school I enjoyed both the transition and change because I had to learn additional subjects. This I found challenging. I also knew I would build on the foundation that I acquired from my previous education. One subject that I was most enthusiastic about and most eager to learn was English. However, the first day of my English class was less than I expected for two reasons: The first reason was the number of students in the class, forty-two, and the second reason was that there were not enough textbooks for each student. In total the teacher distributed 22 textbooks for the 42 students to use. As a consequence we were forced to share these textbooks with each other. The textbook that we received was the Oxford English Book 1, a publication that was funded in part by the British Council and UNICEF (United Nations Children' Fund).

The first few chapters of this book concentrated on vocabulary which included an illustration for each word: to illustrate, the word "book" would have its correct spelling followed by an illustration. As the chapters of the book became progressively more difficult the content also became equally more difficult. The final chapters of the book were in the form of conversations between John and Mary. The major disadvantage of this book was that the content placed heavy emphasis on names and places that were England-based and were unfamiliar to Thai students.

Thai education has been influenced by western educators since the fourteenth century when French missionaries arrived in Thailand. Thai people at the time had considerable difficulty pronouncing the word "foreign". As a consequence western people became known as "Fa-Rang". Today all western people are referred to as "Fa-Rang" and the English language is referred to as "Pasa Fa-Rang". Since the first missionaries arrived in Thailand, Thai people of all social classes have come to accept the concept that everything from western culture is "civilized."

I considered my teacher at senior primary school to be a tall handsome man who was very intelligent. He was one of the few teachers in the school who had a diploma from a teacher's college. The other teachers were high school graduates which was acceptable to the national government because of lack of certification requirements for teacher. Moreover, at that time the national government held the attitude that anyone could teach.

During my first year of senior primary school, I had a teacher who taught us all subjects for 400 minutes a day, 2000 minutes a week. I attended school five days a week, Monday through Friday, eight periods a day. A period was 50 minutes in length. During the school week two periods were devoted to learning English.

My grade five teacher was believed to be a businessman because he would report to the school at 10 o'clock in the morning and leave the school between 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. I would estimate that we spent no more

than 10 periods a semester learning English which I felt was a major disadvantage for the students.

There were times when my teacher asked me to take over the class when he would not be there. Although this placed a burden on me as a student, I felt it an honor and a privilege to be asked to teach my peers. Consequently, I informally became a teacher of English at 11 years of age.

My teaching became imitative of the characteristics of the rote learning practices that my teachers used during class. Those practices I could imitate step by step. The first step was to have my "students" open their textbooks to the page assigned by the teacher. The second step was for me to read a word in English from the textbook and have my classmates repeat the word after me. Then for the third step I would translate the word into Thai and the "students" would repeat what I said. The final step in the lesson was for the "students" to write the words in their notebooks. Today, I retrospectively realize that I was using the lock step method of teaching.

As the daughter of a farming family I had chores to perform after I returned home from school. It was my responsibility to care for 10 water buffaloes and 20 cows that we had on the farm. While I was tending these animals I would practice my English vocabulary. Actually, I found the words I was memorizing to be very boring because I was unable to visualize these words mentally and to apply them to my local situation. For example, words like Marble Arch, London Bridge, Buckingham, and John and Mary had no relevance to my immediate situation. I often thought to myself as I did my chores, "Why am I studying English?" It would

never help me to become a good farmer. At that time English was so far from my reality, that I thought I may never get to use it. Although these questions often occurred I never asked anyone for an answer, not even my teacher because I knew I would have to find the answers myself.

One of the most memorable days of senior primary school was on Friday, July 11, 1973 I was in a mathematics class, one of my least interesting subjects, when a janitor came to the classroom and told me I was to meet with the principal in his office. I became very frightened and concerned, I wondered if I had done something wrong. All the students knew that if you were called to the principal's office you were considered to be in trouble. Students always perceived that call to the principal's office from a negative point of view and not a positive one.

When I arrived at the office of the principal I was most surprised when he asked me to sit down and he smiled. I believed that that was the first time he smiled in the last 10 years. After I was seated he came immediately to the point of my visit – he asked me if I could take a scholarship examination. This examination was held once a year at the provincial capital, 120 kilometres from my village. Initially, I did not want to write the examination for three reasons. First, I totally disliked being involved in any type of competition. Second, I was aspiring to be a farmer after I completed senior primary school so I felt I had no need to take the examination. Third, the distance from the village to the city was long and the fact that the major forms of transportation in my village were either by horses, by cow drawn carts, or by foot made it an unpleasant journey.

After supper, that day, I told my parents about that visit and the principal's request. My entire family was elated and proud that I had been nominated for this honor.

Early the next morning my father and I set out by horse for another town that was 20 kilometres from my village. When we arrived there we hired a car and drove to the provincial capital where we spent the night at the home of a friend of my father. The next morning I wrote the examination although I was confused and excited at the same time because I was under pressure and stress of all that had happened. After I finished writing the exam and left the room my father queried me about the exam. Since I had nothing to say I said nothing.

Three weeks later when I was in class the same janitor walked into my classroom and told me I was to meet with the principal again. That meeting was one of the happiest days of my life because the principal informed me that I had won the scholarship. I was in shock and could not believe that I had won. I thought someone had incorrectly scored the examination. The principal told me that with the exception of English I scored high on all the other subjects. However, I was amazed to learn that my English score was lower than the standard score for that subject.

I tried to determine why I did so poorly on the English portion of the examinations: Was it because of my teacher or did I have higher expectations of myself? Later I was to find out that my teacher was not qualified to teach. When I found that out I gave up the idea of becoming a farmer and made the decision to continue my education and become a teacher. I felt as a teacher I could help the

children of my village to improve their English. When I made the decision to become a teacher I promised myself that I would become a teacher of English. This was the first time in my life I made a promise, it was a promise to become an English teacher for the children of my village.

Learning English in Thai Secondary School

In 1974 when I graduated from senior primary school I entered the first year of secondary school where I would spend the next four years. This school was located 20 kilometres from my village which meant I had to live away from home. One of the subjects I took while in high school was English which was taught for three periods a week. I enjoyed this subject because it was taught by a qualified English teacher. This teacher received a Bachelor's degree in English as well as a diploma from a university in Australia. One disadvantage of having this person as a teacher of English was that he did not permit students to practice conversing in English in his classroom. This teacher to me was the epitome of a grammar-translation teacher. His standard procedure for teaching English was to start with nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, then proceed to verb tenses beginning with simple tense through past perfect to continuous tense. As students in his class, we were required to memorize all the rules of grammar with undue emphasis on irregular verbs, and to verbally repeat what was memorized.

Prior to the end of class the teacher would assign mountains of homework. Each student who failed to complete these homework assignments received some form of punishment which could vary from the student cleaning

washrooms, sweeping floors, or watering plants. Sometimes because of a lack of self-discipline in doing these assignments I elected to clean 10 washrooms as an alternative to doing the assigned homework.

After we finished with the rules of grammar the teacher would focus on reading comprehension exercises from the textbook, English For Thai Students: Book I. When I opened that book, I was surprised to learn that the title of the book and its table of contents did not coincide. There was no connection between the two. The major portion of the book's content concentrated on the history of the United States of America from the time of William Penn to George Washington. Although this book provided Thai students with the opportunity to learn about another culture from a historical perspective, the question needs to be raised. Would it not have been possible for Thai students to learn Thai history in English to build on our background knowledge of the historical evolution of our nation?

Actually, I found this teacher's methods of teaching English to be a trifle boring. The reason for this was that the teacher would stand in front of the class, read each sentence in English from the textbook and then translate it into Thai. Near the end of class period he would ask students questions about what was read or request that we translate these passages. The teacher never gave us opportunities to use alternate motivating activities such as songs, games, or role playing to increase our speaking and understanding ability of English. I believe as students we preferred to be active participants in the learning process instead of passively sitting in our seats watching the teacher be the active participant.

During that time, a written examination was the only form of student assessment available to determine the efficiency of the teaching/learning process. Examinations of this type were administered twice during the semester. Prior to writing these examinations most of the students would "cram" for the exam by memorizing what had been learned from the textbook.

The last year of secondary school learning English placed emphasis on preparing for the university entrance examination. Not many Thai students have access to higher education because the number of students far exceed the number of seats available in universities and colleges across the country. It was a well known fact among our teachers that no more than 10 students from this school would pass the university entrance examination.

In the Thai educational system the reputation of a secondary school is determined by the number of the school's students who are admitted to either a college or a university. This is problematic and could be considered educational apartheid. In order to maintain a school's reputation some teachers of English are teaching to the examination and not teaching for the purpose of student learning. Because the content of the examination for English is based on grammar, sentence structure, and reading comprehension teachers of English place undue emphasis on these components of the examination when they structure their teaching.

Today the national university entrance examinations are administered twice a year. Those examinees with high scores are then readily admitted to university. The higher the scores the more opportunities for students to receive a

higher education. If the score is less than the entrance mark the applicant would lose the chance for admission for that year, or possibly forever.

The Sage on Stage

In 1980 when I completed secondary school and passed the university entrance examination I entered university where I majored in English Education; keeping the promise I previously made to myself. My first and second years at university involved the completion of compulsory courses required for their degree. As an English major I was required in the third and fourth year to complete a series of 16 courses. These courses were divided into 10 skill development courses and six compulsory courses. Among the six compulsory courses were three compulsory literature courses and three linguistics courses. During the last semester of the fourth year, I then took a practicum where I taught English in a secondary school.

From my perspective as a former secondary school teacher of English and now as a teacher educator teaching English as a foreign language I found/find little use for some of the courses I was required to take at university. Courses such as the Shakespeare course provided me with few practical language skills but these courses did provide me with an appreciation of the writings of this playwright. Because of my deficiency in English language competency, I could not derive any kind of aesthetic appreciation of these literary works. I found that the literature courses were of little value to my professional life. I now believe because of my teaching experience that some of these courses could be replaced with additional language courses that would provide graduates with

greater language proficiency or integrate language and culture or teaching methodologies that would help them be more successful as secondary school teachers of English.

The 10 language skill development courses consisted of reading courses, writing courses, and courses in oral communication. Among the 10 professors who taught us two were native English speakers. These two professors taught the oral language courses. All of these professors practiced the teacher-centered learning that was popular 50 years ago. These professors stood at the front of the class as "the sage on stage" where the student was treated as an empty vessel into which the professor poured knowledge. Very little student-teacher interaction occurred. As students, we sat passively listening, sometimes taking notes and other times falling asleep during the lecture. We did this until the end of the semester when it became "cram" time for final examinations. When I graduated from university my grades in English were mediocre and my competence in English was not very strong.

In addition, to courses in the area I wanted to teach English, I also took general pedagogy courses. Due to my political involvement with the student union party in Thailand my attendance in these courses was minimal. My good grades reflected my love of reading and my desire to work and think independently. In the classroom I fell back on my other in learning life – background knowledge and experience such as the strong social and interpersonal skills I developed in part from having nine brothers and sisters and

the "teaching" experience I had as an 11 year old. Thus I still had a very successful practicum.

While attending university there was political unrest in Thailand – there was a movement to democratize the nation. I supported that movement. University students formed an organization called the Student Union Party of Thailand. Because of my political beliefs, I became an active member of that party. My party membership and my active role in the party had an effect on my class attendance during my last two years of university – I rarely, if ever, attended classes. As a matter of fact, I left my studies and became part of the frontier that wanted to change Thai society and this made my attendance in classes minimal.

The Promise of a Hill Tribe Woman

Because of my educational background I first became a secondary school teacher of English and later was appointed to the position of teacher educator at Mahasarakham University where I taught teaching English as a foreign language courses. As a teacher educator, it was partly my responsibility to prepare students to become effective teachers who will make a contribution to Thai society as well as become good citizens. Since I have been a graduate student at the doctoral level at the University of Alberta I have come to question whether or not I am adequately prepared for the realities of the world, educational changes, and demands that will take place during the first quarter of the 21st century. I now see a need to revitalize my approach to teaching and to find new methodologies and strategies for presenting instructional content to my students.

My predominant language of communication still remains Thai with English as my second language. One of the major difficulties I have as a foreign student in Canada is my frustration with my inability to communicate in English with Canadians within and outside the university. I believe that this frustration comes from my tendency to translate what is said in English into Thai and then back translate before I respond. Since I am from a homogeneous culture I feel lonely in a culturally diverse country like Canada. My hope has been that, that loneliness will disappear with the more time I spend here.

When I walk through campus or on the streets of Edmonton the world that I see is very different than what I saw in my home country. Very little in this new environment is familiar to me. I want to talk to people but I am too reserved to do so because I am unsure of my ability to communicate (i.e., to correctly form a sentence). I also have the fear that the person I am addressing might consider me aggressive and not respond.

When I attended my first class at this university I left the class at the end of the lecture feeling upset, very inadequate, as well as being frustrated. The professor spoke very rapidly which did not allow me time to comprehend what was said. The professor used terms and words that were unfamiliar to me nor did he define the terms that he used. Colloquialisms were also used which added to my lack of understanding and confusion. These were understood by Canadian students but not by the majority of foreign students. I fully realize that the predominant language of the university for all its personnel is English. If I am going to overcome the obstacles I met with during my first day of class, then I am

going to have to meet the challenge of communicating, understanding, and interpreting English through practice. This responsibility rests with me.

In retrospect when I consider that English has been taught in Thailand for over a century I wonder why Thai people are not able to communicate verbally and why they have not developed adequate listening comprehension skills in English. I feel that this phenomenon may be related to the fact that those in Thailand who teach English at all levels of education may be using inappropriate methods of instruction to deliver instructional content. I know that students at both the university and the secondary school levels are knowledgeable about English grammar. They have the ability to identify an article and change the tense of a verb but lack the ability to communicate their ideas, feelings. . . orally and in writing because neither verbal communication nor listening skills are part of the curriculum for English language education. Furthermore, despite the changes in curricular ideas and documents at the national level, only change at the instructional level – in the classroom-will really make a difference.

As a teacher, I had taught English in the Thai context for 19 years. I have promised myself that I would help my students to develop the ability to communicate in English and avoid the frustration I experienced as a student during my time in Canada. I have also been thinking about how to improve my teaching; how to use communicative language teaching (CLT) in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom which aspects of CLT could be integrated with other methods to fit the Thai context. It is exactly these questions that lead me to the idea of conducting a study on CLT in Thailand for my doctoral research.

Chapter One

Review of the Literature

The role of English in the 21st Century

English language began 1,500 years, originally spoken by obscure Germanic tribes who invaded England. It now encompasses the globe (Hasman, 2000, p.3). Today English is used for more purposes than ever before. Vocabulary, grammatical forms, and ways of speaking and writing have been influenced by technological and scientific developments, economics and management literature, and entertainment genres.

Today, the information age has replaced the industrial age and has compressed time and distance. This is transforming world economies from industrial production to information-based goods and services. Ignoring geography and borders, the information evolution is redefining how English is used. In less than 20 years, information processing, once limited to the printed word, has given way to computers and the internet. Computer-mediated communication is closing the gap between spoken and written English. It encourages more informal language and tolerance for diversity and individual styles, and has resulted in the internet English replacing the authority of language institutes and practice (Shih, 1999).

Worldwide over 1.4 billion people live in countries where English has official status. One out of five of the world's population speaks English with some degree of competence. And by the year 2000 one in five – over one billion people – will also be learning English. About 90 percent of all information in the world's

electronically retrieval systems is stored in English. By 2010, the number of people who speak English as a second or foreign language will exceed the number of native speakers (Hasman, 2000, p.3).

Asia is one of the most rapidly developing regions in the world. It has risen to prominence in all areas of industry, manufacturing and economy. Yet Asia is characterized by its diversity as much as by its uniformity. Development has brought increased links with the world as well as within Asia itself and the primary medium of communication is the English language (retrieved May 9, 2000, from the World Wide Web: http://www. Culi.chula.ac.th/eltlinks/eltlinks.html). More local and international English language publications are available in Asian countries than ever before, and English is the dominant language of the internet as well as of business communication (Shih, 1999, p.21).

Thailand, like other countries of the world, is greatly influenced by the proliferation of information generated by information technology. Thai people consume enormous amounts of information from all over the world. Almost all formats of information, both print and non-print, are presented in the form of English, which is accepted by the Thai people as an international language (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

What is CLT?

Understanding of communicative language teaching (CLT) was a concurrent development on both sides of the Atlantic. In Europe, during the 1970s, the language needs of a rapidly increasing number of immigrants and

guest workers, and a rich British linguistic tradition, that included social as well as linguistic descriptions of language behavior, led the Council of Europe to develop a syllabus for learners based on function-notional concepts of language use. Meanwhile Savignon (1991) reminds us that in 1970 in the United States, Hymes reacted to Chomsky's characterization of the linguistic competence of the ideal native speaker and proposed the term "communicative competence" to represent the use of language in social context, the observance of sociolinguistic norms of appropriacy.

CLT is an approach which brings linguistic knowledge, language skills and communicative abilities into association with one another (Canale & Swain, 1980; Widdowson, 1978). Canale and Swain(1980) and Savignon (1982) identified the four dimensions of communicative competence:

1. Grammatical competence reflects knowledge of the linguistic code itself. It includes knowledge of vocabulary and rules of word formation, pronunciation, spelling, and sentence formation.

2. Sociolinguistic competence addresses the extent to which sentences are "produced and understood appropriately". It includes knowledge of speech acts such as directives, imperatives (e.g., come here) and apologies (e.g., I'm sorry). Such competence enables speakers to vary their language appropriately according to the addressee. It allows speakers to signal levels of politeness and formality and to establish their credibility.

3. Discourse competence refers to the knowledge of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in various genres and situations.

4. Strategic competence refers to the mastery of the communication strategies that may be called into action either to enhance the effectiveness of communication or to compensate for breakdown in communication due to limiting factors in actual communication or to insufficient competence in one or more of the other competencies.

Canale and Swain (1980) clearly illustrate the significance of grammar. Without grammar learners can communicate effectively only in a limited number of situations. Grammatical accuracy and communicative fluency are no less important than each other.

Nunan and Lamb (1996) and Nunan (1991) characterized CLT as follow:

> CLT activities involve real communication; carrying out meaningful tasks and using language that is meaningful to the learner to promote learning. CLT engages the learner in communication; involves processes such as information sharing negotiation of meaning and interaction. . . . The learner is a negotiator, interactor, who gives as well as takes. The teacher is a facilitator of the communication process. Primary roles of promoting communicative language use are task based, authentic materials (p. 14).

Today it seems that CLT is the hottest direction in ESL/EFL teaching. Most modern methods and techniques emphasize it, and most U.S textbooks and materials are designed for it (Anderson, 1993, p.471).

CLT in EFL Contexts

CLT has had an influence in both second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) teaching since the early 1970's. CLT opens up a wider perspective

on language learning, particularly in SL settings and particularly with students who already demonstrate some language ability, i.e., not absolute beginners. CLT makes teachers more strongly aware that it is not enough to teach the learner how to manipulate the structures of a foreign language; the learner must also develop strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions and real time (Littlewood, 1981, pp. viii-ix).

While CLT has proven very popular in SL settings with native speaking teachers, there seems to be a mismatch between CLT and FL contexts. CLT was designed for teaching English in English dominant contexts or what we call second language (SL) settings. Ellis' (1996) study of CLT in Vietnam where English is taught as EFL, that is a setting in which students have no or minimal exposure to the new language outside of the classroom, showed that CLT is a teaching methodology better suited to second language (SL) settings. In such an environment the ESL student has a far greater need to communicate verbally using English as the language of communication and is exposed to more of the SL. In this teaching/learning situation the ESL teacher becomes more of a facilitator, providing structure, explanations, and a forum for discussion of experiences the student has outside the classroom. The EFL setting, on the other hand, could be considered a "culture island" with the EFL teacher cast in the somewhat onerous role of sole provider of experience in the target language.

Because EFL is part of the prescribed school curriculum in Thailand and subject to government policy, the teacher must be able to prepare EFL learning activities. These learning activities depend upon teacher's language proficiency

and the teaching resources that are available to the teacher. As a consequence, while CLT may be the best approach for learning English in "immersion" contexts (in the U.S, Canada, UK, New Zealand or Australia) and the most efficient kind of training for those who need to live within a culture, it may not meet the needs of others in distant lands, who are learning English for different purposes.

However, a number of reports in the literature deal with CLT innovations in EFL contexts. Some have strongly advocated the adoption of CLT in EFL countries (Li, 1984 ; Prabhu, 1987). Kenny and Savage (1997; Retrieved May 23, 2000, from the World Wide Web: http://www.clet.ait.ac.th). For example, professors at the Centre for Language and Educational Technology, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, Thailand, adapted a form of CLT to teach AIT students and also used the adaptation for in-service training of primary school teachers in Southeast Asia; Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Philippines, and Thailand.

Some EFL educators attempted to adapt CLT into an EFL setting. Fotos (1994); Fotos and Ellis (1991), professors of English and applied linguistics in Japan, studied the use of grammar consciousness-raising tasks as a possible method for the development of knowledge of problematic grammar structures through communicative activities.

Despite these successes, the majority of accounts have recognized the difficulties EFL teachers face in adopting CLT. For instance:

a) Burnaby and Sun (1989) insisted that differences exist between EFL in China and ESL in Canada in their analysis of Chinese teachers' views of current

language teaching methods in China and anglophone teaching in Canada, as well as the basics of CLT.

b) Li (1998) undertook a case study of South Korean secondary school English teachers to determine their understanding of CLT in EFL contexts. His findings suggest that secondary EFL teachers had difficulties adopting curricular innovations prompted by the adoption of CLT. The constraints caused by the teachers cited included strategic and sociolinguistic competence in English, lack of training in CLT, few opportunities for training CLT, deficiency in spoken English, misconceptions about CLT, and little time and expertise for developing communicative materials. In addition, the differences between CLT and traditional teaching methods, culture, and the roots of educational philosophy of EFL countries make it difficult to implement CLT in EFL context (Masur, 1998; Li, 1997; Ellis, 1996; Hayes, 1995; Penner, 1995; Anderson, 1993).

Because the literature on CLT in SL contexts is so positive, we cannot dismiss it as an approach to teaching and learning additional languages. However, because the literature on CLT in EFL contexts suggests that adaptation is needed, but is scant on concrete suggestions about this adaptation, my study on adapting CLT to the Thai context will make an original contribution to academic research.

Learning/Teaching English in Thailand

Background

The Kingdom of Thailand is situated in the heart of Southeast Asia, with Bangkok as the capital city. Thailand's area is 198,114 square miles, the shape

of which resembles the head of an elephant. The country shares a border with Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia. It borders two bodies of water, the Gulf of Thailand and the Indian Ocean. Thailand measures approximately 1,553 miles north to south and 776 miles east to west. It is roughly the size of Texas. It has 1,143 coastal miles on the Gulf of Thailand and 528 miles on the Indian Ocean (retrieved July 31, 2000, from the World Wide Web: http://www. thaiembdc.org/abouttthai/overview.htm) (see Map 1 page 25).

Thailand is divided into four natural regions: the north, northeast, the central plain, and the south. The north is a mountainous region comprising of natural forest, ridges and deep, narrow alluvial valleys. The northeast region is an arid region characterized by a rolling surface and undulating hills. Central Thailand is a lush, fertile valley – the richest and most extensive rice-producing area in the country. The southern region is hilly, thick in forests and rich deposits of minerals and iron ores. This region is the center for the production of rubber and the cultivation of other tropical crops. Thailand has warm, tropical climate affected by annual monsoon, with a rainy season from June to October and a dry season the rest of the year. Temperature average 75 to 92 degree Fahrenheit, with the highest temperatures from March to May and the lowest December and January (retrieved July 31, 2000 from http://www.thaiembdc.org/aboutthai/overview.htm).

The population of Thailand is 60,037,366 (1998). About 10 million of, whom live in the capital city of Bangkok. The largest ethnic minority is the Chinese and other ethnic groups include Malays, Cambodians, Vietnamese, and Indian. Buddhism is the faith of 95 percent of the population. There is absolute

freedom of religion; Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and other faiths are practised and protected by the constitution (retrieved December 28, 1999, from the World Wide Web: http://www.usa.or.th/relation/bgnotes.htm).

The only country in Southeast Asia never colonized, Thailand was known for centuries as Siam. Thailand's government structure has undergone gradual and practical evolution in response to the changing political environment. Ever since 1932, it has been a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentarian form of government. The bicameral parliament is composed of elected representatives and appointed senators. The Prime Minister is selected from among members of the House of Representatives. The Bangkok Metropolis Administration is administered by an elected governor and is divided into 38 districts. The country is divided into 76 provinces, each administered by an appointed governor which are sub-divided into district, sub-districts, and villages. Prior to 1932, Thailand's political history may be summarized into three chronological kingdoms. The Kingdom of Sukhothai (1257-1378) adopted the paternalistic system of government, where the King had absolute power and reigned over his subjects, paying close attention to their well-being. The succeeding Ayutthaya Kingdom, during the 1300-1400 inherited extensive Khmer traditions and customs, including their system of government based on the concept of divine rights. The succeeding Rattanakosin Kingdom established in 1767, with Bangkok as the capital, also adapted the Ayutthaya system of governance. Three centuries later, with the threatening advance of colonialism, King Rama V, who reigned during the late 19th century, carried out a major reorganization of the central, regional

and local administrations, forming the basis of the present system (retrieved July 31, 2000, from http://www.thaiembdc.org/aboutthai/overview.htm).

The official national language, spoken by almost 100 percent of the population, is Thai. It is a tonal language, uninflected, and predominantly monosyllabic, borrowed mainly from Khmer, Pali, or Sanskrit. Dialects are spoken in rural areas. Chinese and Malay are also spoken in some areas. English is the language taught as a foreign language. The written Thai language is read horizontally from left to right as is English, consists of 44 consonants and 32 vowels that combine to formulate syllabic sounds. The sounds are combined with five different tones – even, high, low, rising and falling – to produce a melodious, lyrical language. The basic structure of Thai sentences is subject/verb/object with adjectives following nouns. In many cases, verbs can be changed into nouns with the use of prefix. Each Thai word is complete in as much as there are no Thai suffixes, genders, articles, declensions or plurals. Different pronouns (at least 47, including some 17 *I*'s and 19 *you* 's) and different qualifying nouns and verbs are used by different classes – royalty, ecclesiastics and lay people. Because Thai's pronominal structure illustrates rank and intimacy, there are, in effect, four different languages – a royal language, an ecclesiastic language, a polite everyday vernacular and an earthy, pungent slang (retrieved July 31, 2000, from the World Wide Web http://www.mahidol.ac.th/thailand/glance-thai/language.html).

Map1

Map of Thailand

http://www.maptown.com/thailand.html

English Learning/Teaching

English learning/teaching in Thailand can be traced back to the early Bangkok period, the late 19th century. During this period, a number of treaties were concluded with foreign powers, mostly, in the form of treaties of friendship. Since English became the *lingua franca* of the Far East. King Rama IV realized that the kind of education provided by the nation was not adequate for future government officials. He commanded that measures would be taken to modernize the country and a good knowledge of English would become an educational requirement, and become a necessary key to further knowledge as well as a medium of communication with foreigners. The policy of educational modernization was further pursued by King Rama V (1868-1910). He set up an English school in the palace to prepare princes and court children for further studies abroad as well as a number of schools outside the palace for the education of commoners' children (retrieved May 9, 2000, from the World Wide Web: http://www.moe.go.th).

Modernized Education for National Development period (1932-1997) and increased foreign contact necessitated the expansion of English language training (retrieved March 24, 2000, from the World Wide Web: http://www.onec.go.th). EFL teacher training programs were mainly staffed by foreigners from the British Council and the American University Alumni (AUA) who anticipated conducting programs that incorporated methodology, materials testing, linguistics, and classroom observation. They assumed that the Thai people would want to learn about current western ideas on the teaching of

language. Many were surprised about the resistance and lack of apparent change in teaching. From my perspective, more effort should be made to research the special features of English learning and teaching in the EFL situation. In the long run EFL countries should establish their/our own contingent of language researchers in order to develop English teaching theories more suitable for EFL contexts.

As a teacher educator, reflecting on several decades of experience it is my perception that teachers in Thailand believe that learning English is learning the body of knowledge, and that teachers of English have this knowledge and the learners do not. Therefore they perceive that it is the role of the teacher to impart this knowledge to the learners. Thus, in Thailand learning a language consists of students learning the structural rules of the language and its vocabulary through such activities as memorization, reading, and writing. Approaches to learning English in a Thai context do not place emphasis on communicative activities. As a result Thai students are good at memorizing the skills of grammar, but are unable to use these skills to communicate effectively with others.

I further perceive that almost all EFL teachers in Thailand are well aware that there exists a gap between linguistic competence and communicative competence; many are ready to narrow this gap. Learners are not confident to respond when confronted with the real world use of English as a foreign language. Of course, this kind of phenomenon is not confined to speaking only, but also to writing, reading, and listening. As a consequence, in order to improve a learner's progress in developing communicative competence, teachers need to

devise a variety of activities in which learners can use the English language as a means to communicate both orally and in writing as well as in situations that require reading.

Since many EFL teachers in Thailand recognize the need to change, the time is right to encourage them to do so. To bridge the gap between linguistic competence and communicative competence teachers need to understand what CLT looks like in a classroom setting. During my doctoral studies I struggled to come to terms with this matter. The following tools helped me to translate CLT from theory into practice.

a) Bilash's Second Language Instructional Model (B-SLIM)

b) Bilash's criteria for communicative activities (BCCA)

c) Gardner's multiple intelligences (GMI)

Bilash's Second Language Instructional Model (B-SLIM)

B-SLIM has five parts – planning and preparation; comprehensible input; intake (getting it and using it); output; and evaluation (see Figure 1 page 39).

Planning and Preparation

During planning teachers select activities and texts according to the goals of the program and interests of learners. They also prepare materials that are needed to assist learners to successfully complete the task or activities they plan. These materials should be interesting, relevant, reality-based, authentic and personalized for the learners. The amount of time and skills required to prepare is often overlooked when introducing CLT in new settings.

Comprehensible Input

During the comprehensible input phase teachers must present "new" ideas, strategies, concepts or knowledge to learners by building on what they already know. They can make this input comprehensible by simplifying their talk, e.g., speaking slowly and clearly, repeating important words, high frequency vocabulary, less slang, and fewer idioms, examples, clarifications, mnemonics, visuals and modeling should also be used to make input comprehensible.

There are nine types of input: language awareness, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, situation/fluency, Culture/culture, learning strategies, positive attitude, and skills.

Language Awareness

Language awareness is a syllabus of (a) content about language; (b) language skill; (c) attitudinal education; and (d) metacognitive opportunities to reflect on the process of language acquisition, learning and language use, all designed to be completely integrated into existing subject areas and taught in student-centered classrooms according to student readiness (Bilash, & Tulasiewicz, 1995, p.49).

Pronunciation

Pronunciation, an aspect of speaking, is an important and difficult skill for foreign language learners. Before someone speaks they must feel comfortable saying the sounds of a language. Pronunciation practice should be focused on fluency, rhythm, and intonation in context, and can be provided by working with mirrors to show the formation of the face when making sounds, diagram of the

face as well as short practice dialogues, repetition, songs, depending on the age of the learner.

Vocabulary

Learners of a foreign language realize that words are essential, and the lack of them leads to feelings of insecurity. A distinction needs to be made between (a) active vocabulary – words which students understand, can pronounce correctly, and use constructively in speaking and writing, and (b) passive vocabulary – words that students recognize and understand when they occur in a context, but which they cannot produce correctly themselves. There is also a need to limit the vocabulary that is introduced – if too much is introduced at any one time, students will be impeded by the need to absorb too many words. The vocabulary teachers introduce is to some extent conditioned by the textbooks teachers are using, but teachers may choose to bring in other vocabulary that teachers feel are relevant for students (Haycraft, 1978). Furthermore, teachers need to introduce basic survival vocabulary – words which students use to communicate such as number, colour, animal, question word, greeting, time, and transportation (Alberta Education and Teacher Resources Manual for Teaching, 1992).

Grammar

These days the emphasis tends to be on "communicative" teaching of grammar through inductive discovery of rules and principles and the provision of opportunities for group discussion. However, given the many learning styles of

students both inductive and deductive strategies are required in the classroom. Questions to consider in relation to the teaching of grammar include:

- Should the item be taught deductively (giving the rule and then getting learners to produce examples of target structure) or inductive (giving examples of the target structure and getting learners to generate the rule?)
- Are the examples and models clear? Should additional examples be provided?
- Are teachers themselves sure of the rules? (Nunan, 1999).

Situations/Fluency

Learning a second or foreign language means progressively developing the ability to use the SL/FL in a greater variety of contexts or situations with increasing comfort or "fluency". Students must learn to relate language to social meaning and to use it as a vehicle for social interaction. It is necessary to increase their sense of performing in meaningful social contexts, rather than simply responding to prompts (Danesi & Mollica, 1998, Berns, 1990).

Culture/culture

Culture can be divided into two aspects: big "C" (history, geography, institutions, literature, art, and music) and small "C" (behavior, customs, habit, dress, food, leisure) (Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993). Kramsch (1993) believes that foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and, in one form or another, culture has, even implicitly, been taught in the foreign language classroom. Culture should be taught as an interpersonal process and, rather than presenting cultural facts, teachers should assist language learners in coming to

grips with other culture. She also believes that culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques – such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task – used by students to enhance their own learning. Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are the tools for interactive, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communication ability (Oxford, 1990). Appropriate learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence in many instances. It appears that skilled learners tend to select strategies that work well together in a highly orchestrated way, tailored to the requirements of the language task. Less skilled learners might use similar strategies with similar frequency, but without the careful orchestration and without appropriate targeting of the strategies to the task. Teachers need to identify students' learning strategies, conduct training on learning strategies, and help learners become more independent (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992).

Positive Attitude

Learners have different attitudes toward (a) the target language; (b) target language speakers; (c) the target language culture; (d) the social value of learning the target language; (e) particular uses of the target language; and (f)

themselves as members of their own culture. These attitudes reflect and reinforce L2 proficiency achieved (Stern, 1983, p. 377).

Attitudes have been measured indirectly by the Semantic Differential Technique and by Spolsky's Identify Scale (Spolsky, 1969). In the Spolsky Identity Scale subjects are given a list of adjectives and asked to say how well each adjective describes themselves, their ideal self, people whose native language is the same as theirs and native speakers of the target language. Direct measurements involve self-report questionnaires.

Although there are disagreements about the validity and reliability of attitude measurement, in general, positive attitudes towards the L2, its speakers and its culture can be expected to enhance learning and negative attitudes to impede learning. Positive attitudes toward the language and culture are very important in SL/FL learning success (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Positive attitudes might spur learners to interact with native speakers, which in turn increases the amount of input that learners receive (Krashen, 1982) and the opportunities for practice of authentic communication. Positive attitudes often lead learners to use a variety of learning strategies that can facilitate skills in language learning. Positive attitudes encourage greater overall effort on the part of language learners and typically result in greater success in terms of global language proficiency and competence in specific language skills such as listening, reading, and speaking. Positive attitudes also help learners maintain their language skills after classroom instruction is over (Gardner, 1985). Because the attitude is so very important in language learning, instructional activities and

materials should be exciting, stimulating, and interesting to learners. Moreover, teachers should pay special attention to the attitudes students bring to language learning. Teachers should help reverse any negative attitudes (including cultural stereotyping) students may have and must try to inculcate positive attitudes toward the target culture, the language, and the language learning process (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992).

Skills

Skills include listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as others such as problem solving, conducting research, and engaging in cooperative learning.

a) Listening

Listening comprehension is a key and initial step in communication. Teachers need to construct activities to enhance learners' listening comprehension. Nunan and Lamb (1996) suggest that the important thing teachers need to discuss before preparing activities are:

- Is it necessary to provide a context for the listening?
- Should one or two items from the listening exercises be modeled for the whole class so that learners know what to do?
- How will learners check their answers?

b) Speaking

In planning speaking activities, teachers need to decide whether students need high structure (for example drills and controlled practice) for practice in learning or "getting it" or low structure (for example role plays,

simulations) for "using it". Questions to consider in relation to speaking include the following:

- Is it necessary to review the language to be exploited in task?
- Will the learners work in pairs or small groups?
- How will teachers provide feedback?

c) Reading

In preparation for reading, it is usually a good idea to have a whole class discussion to tap into the learners' experience and knowledge relevant to the subject matter of text before reading. This discussion enables a sharing or pooling of knowledge, introduces some relevant concepts and language and sets up expectations about the information contained in the text. Teachers may also need to cover key vocabulary and/or difficult structures before learners begin the reading task. The reading task usually begins with a specific prediction or orientation activity. This activity may be done as a whole class, in groups, pairs or individually depending on the level of difficulty of the text. After reading there is a need to follow-up students' understandings and perceptions (Nunan & Lamb, 1996).

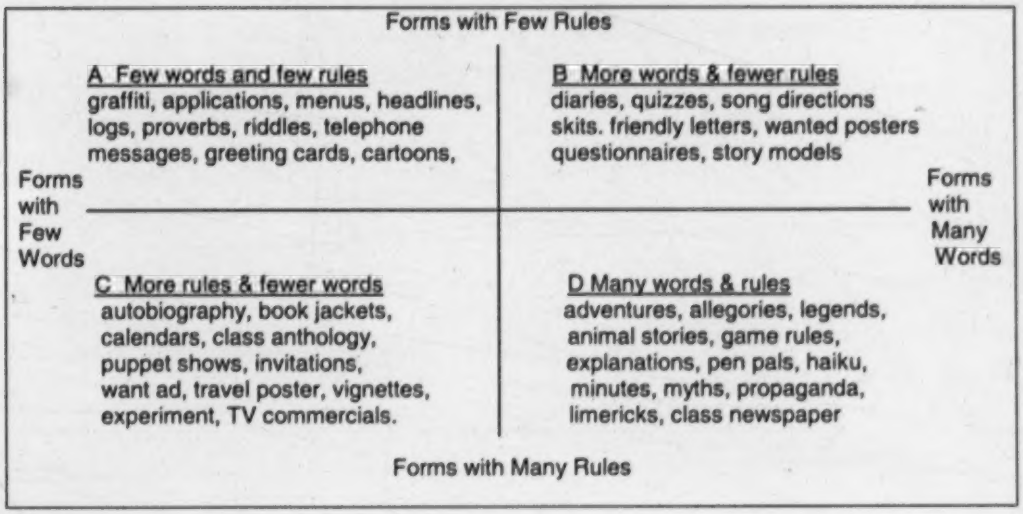
d) Writing

Bilash (1998) notes that writing skills are a key functional component in achieving proficiency in a second language. Learning to write is not just a natural extension of learning to speak. It is not speech written down on paper. In a SL/FL writing must be taught explicitly. For example, phrases of comparison, contrast, or connection which are commonly used in print

but less often heard in oral language, may be completely new to second language learners. To help them succeed as second language writers, certain structures must be made available to them on an ongoing basis. Teachers must plan carefully to ensure that each student receives the support s/he needs (p.160). Bilash (1998) reminds us how "forms" can help SL/FL learners enhance their writing (see diagram 1 page 37). There are four quadrants or gradations of forms created by intersecting two continua – forms governed by the amount of words required and forms governed by increasingly more complex schematic structures. The quadrants include forms that range from those requiring minimal words with minimal rules (A), more words with fewer rules (B), and more rules with fewer words (C) to forms requiring both many rules and many words (D). The quadrants are meant to be used as a guide for teachers when planning writing tasks for SL/FL students. These quadrants are meant to be used by teachers as planning checks for reducing the affective filter. Furthermore, forms representing the six main functions of writing (descriptive, persuasive, expository, narrative, expressive, poetic) can be found in each quadrant. Students need opportunities to practise various forms and functions in writing and within these to develop the different skills involved in producing written texts. In other words, each function of writing involves both simple and complex forms.

Diagram 1

Four Quadrants-Gradations of Form


Forms with Few Rules
A Few words and few rules
graffiti, applications, menus, headlines, logs, proverbs, riddles, telephone messages, greeting cards, cartoons,
B More words & fewer rules
diaries, quizzes, song directions skits. friendly letters, wanted posters questionnaires, story models
Forms with Few Words
Forms with Many Words
C More rules & fewer words
autobiography, book jackets, calendars, class anthology, puppet shows, invitations, want ad, travel poster, vignettes, experiment, TV commercials.
D Many words & rules
adventures, allegories, legends, animal stories, game rules, explanations, pen pals, haiku, minutes, myths, propaganda, limericks, class newspaper
Forms with Many Rules

Intake

Intake refers to the time and process of "learning" content. Acknowledging that learners will not get all of the input teachers present at once, teachers need to make sure that learners have opportunities to do two things. First, learners must understand what they need to learn which is called "intake-getting it". During this phase teachers must review, break learning into small chunks, and structure activities in order to help students "get" or understand the input. The amount of time required to "get" a concept varies from learner to learner.

Second, learners must have opportunities to practice input until they have learned it which is called "intake-using it". During this phase teachers must construct a variety of activities for students to practice in a safe and trusting environment. Since intake activities vary in difficulty and complexity, they might be seen as being placed along a continuum of difficulty.

While "intake-using it" activities can be communicative in nature, "intake-getting it" activities are not. The former can also include "exercises" (skill-drill).

Output

The Output phase allows learners to fully integrate and apply all aspects of language (all categories of input) orally and/or in writing. Output activities should be personal and creative. They can include activities or "final projects" such as preparing a recipe, menu, schedule, map, radio weather report, as well as writing journals, essays and stories.

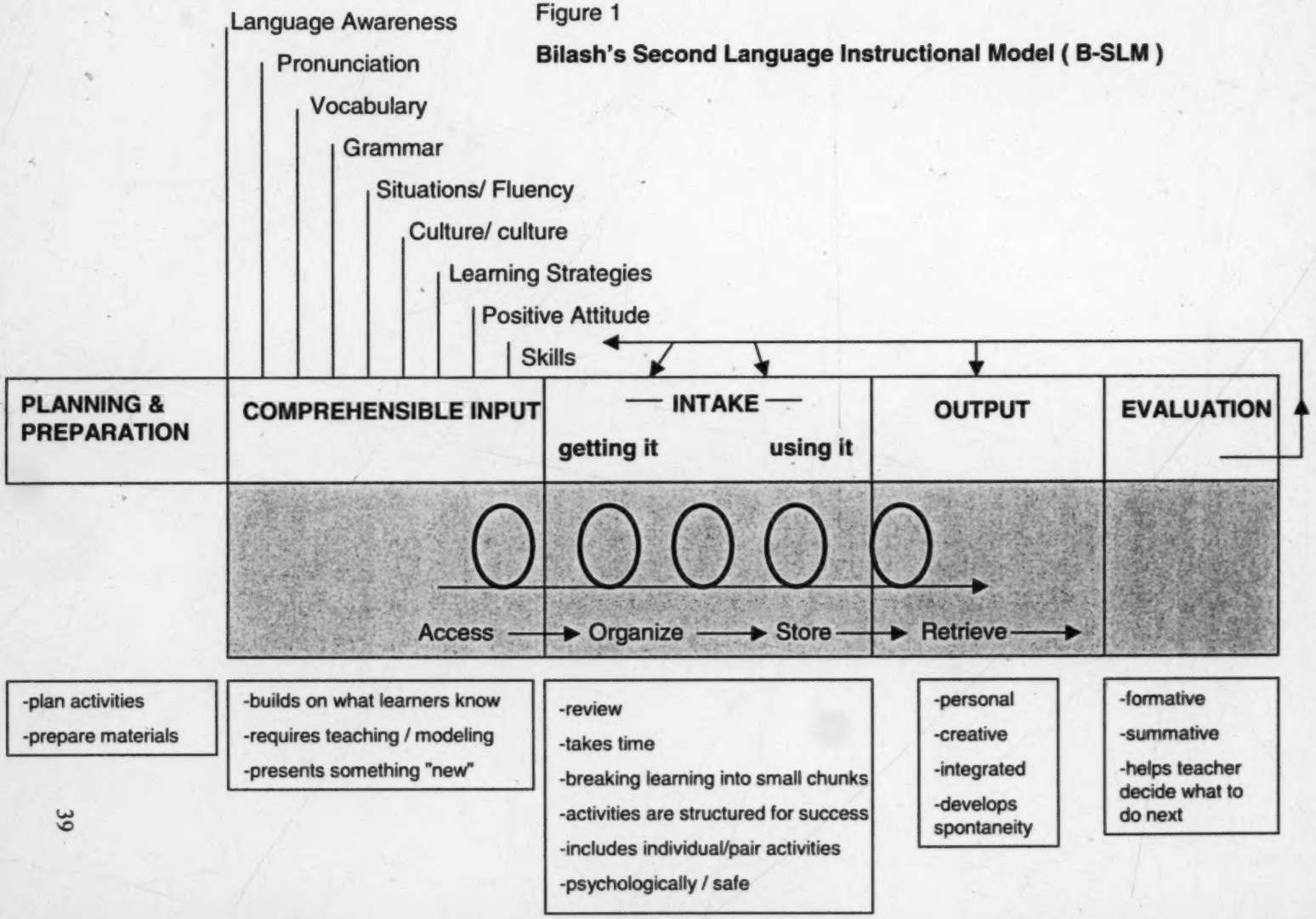
Evaluation

During the evaluation phase teachers gather data in order to make decisions about what students need to learn next and how. They also reflect on and monitor their own teaching. Teachers use formative evaluation both formally and informally throughout every teaching day and summative evaluation to record final grades and comments about growth and performance over a long period of time such as a school term or a school year.

In B-SLIM learning is not a linear process but recursive. B-SLIM was developed by Bilash (2000) for several purposes. First, she noted that second language teachers needed a common language to discuss their classroom practice. Second, they needed a model to help them reflect upon their planning, instruction, assessment, and student learning. Third, in working as a textbook developer and consultant for SL resource development, she noted that teachers needed to understand why activities had to be developed for all phases of the model.

Figure 1

Bilash's Second Language Instructional Model (B-SLM)



Bilash's Criteria for Communicative Activities (BCCA)

CLT is often called an approach rather than a method. It represents a philosophy of learning. Its approach is flexible and responsive to learner needs and preferences. Its basic features are:

a) An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

b) The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.

c) The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language, but also on the learning process itself.

d) An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.

e) An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom (retrieved May 14, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.abacom.com/nathan/clt.htm).

CLT was a response to the failure of audiolingualism and came to be a symbol of everything that audiolingualism could not be (Savignon, 1983). Activities in CLT are often carried out by students in small groups (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). CLT uses almost any activities that engaged learners in authentic communication. Littlewood (1981) however, has distinguished two major activity types: (a) functional communication activities: ones aimed at developing certain language skills and functions, but which involve communication; and (b) social interaction activities, such as conversations and discussions, dialogues and role plays.

In terms of how communicative competence could best be acquired in an ESL/EFL context. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) suggest the following principles.

a) Teachers bring the outside world into the classroom by using role-playing, simulation, and problem-solving activities;

b) Whenever possible, teachers use "authentic language", naturally occurring language that is not modified for use in language classrooms. When it is not possible to use "authentic language", teachers use simulated, authentic materials;

c) Teachers emphasize meaning. Being able to figure out a speaker's or writer's intentions is part of being communicatively competent;

d) Teachers give students opportunities to express their own ideas and opinions;

e) Teachers encourage students to work in cooperative learning groups that maximize their communicative involvement, draw out shy students, and help vocal students to develop good listening skills; and

f) Teachers create activities that promote the students' exposure to and use of the diverse components of communicative competence.

Communicative Activities–Is the activity communicative?

Drawing upon the research espousing CLT Bilash (2000) designed the BCCA to help teachers assess the communicativeness of classroom activities, in particular intake "getting it" and "using it" activities . BCCA has 11 criteria:

a) What functions of language are required in carrying out the activity?

b) Does the activity utilize authentic materials?

c) Do students need to use stretches of language?

d) Are students learning something more than vocabulary or grammar?

e) Is everyone required to listen and talk in order to complete the activity?

f) Is interaction necessary?

g) Is thinking or problem solving required in order to complete the activity?

h) Is the activity based on a real life context?

i) Do students have to provide honest personal response?

j) Does the activity require low risk high security?

k) Is the activity motivating, fun, and interesting? (Bilash, 2000).

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (GMI)

Although Howard Gardner's theory is an intelligence theory, many have used his ideas as the basis for a learning style model. For Gardner intelligence is " the ability to solve problems or fashion products that make a difference in a particular cultural setting" (Gardner, 1993, p. 14). He believes that there are many intelligences and that each has skills which are rooted in biological origins universal to the species. He also believes that all children can learn if their style of learning is addressed. His theory of Multiple Intelligences is based on eight concepts. These are: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal (Gardner, 1983), and naturalistic (Gardner, 1999). They can be summarized as follows:

The linguistic learner is the type who likes to read books, write, and tell stories. This child has a good memory for names, places, dates, and trivia

information. This child will learn best by saying, hearing, and seeing words. The logical-mathematical learner is the type who excels at math. This child has strong problem-solving and reasoning skills. He/she likes to ask question in a logical manner. The spatial learner is a learner who needs a mental or physical picture to best understand new information. This child does well with maps, charts, and diagrams. He/she likes mazes and puzzles and has a good imagination – can draw, design, and create things. The musical learner is the type who likes to respond to music. This child remembers melodies and notices pitch and rhythm. He/she is aware of surrounding sounds, such as the nearly inaudible ticking of a watch or a bird singing outside. For this learner, learning often comes easier if things are set to music or to a beat. This child can gain information through ballads and other song lyrics. The bodily-kinesthetic learner is one who is good at physical activities. This child has tendency to move around, touch things, and gesture. This child likes craft activities and drawing and can express him or herself through dance, drama, and movement. The interpersonal learner has strong leadership skills. This child understands people and is sociable. Discussions, interviews, debates, and verbal problem-solving sessions are good activities for this child. The intrapersonal learner has a strong sense of self. This child is confident, a bit of dreamer, and often prefers working alone. He/she follows through on interests and goals, asking help as needed and is good instincts about strengths and abilities. The naturalistic learner is comfortable in nature and draws inspiration from working with animals, to protect the environment and to "live" on the land.

CLT in Thailand

A number of both government and private projects have been established in Thailand in order to improve EFL learning. Because of its concern and in an effort to help solve this problem the Ministry of Education (1996) in particular revised the EFL curriculum. The main aim of the revised curriculum was to enable learners to use English in socio-culturally and cognitively appropriate ways in a variety of everyday contexts. Thus learning/teaching EFL in Thailand places emphasis on communicative competence which involves four areas of knowledge and skills. These include: (a) grammatical competence; (b) sociolinguistic competence; (c) discourse competence; and (d) strategic competence.

One of the principle features of 1996 EFL curriculum was that Thai educators were to start teaching EFL at the grade 1 level in all public primary schools of the nation. To accomplish this a large number of primary school teachers attended an intensive training program in English assigned by the Ministry of Education working in collaboration with the Basic Occupational Education and Training Program (BOET). This program was funded by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). BOET was responsible for providing personnel expertise to conduct EFL workshops in Thailand. These workshops were conducted with the approval of the Ministry of Education. The main purpose of these workshops was to introduce primary school teachers to teach English from a communicative child-centered approach to teaching and learning, rather than being teacher dominated (Shaw, et. al., 1998).

Shaw, a workshop facilitator from BOET, was also critical of the revised curriculum. Although the curriculum introduced English at the grade 1 level, Shaw perceived that curriculum to be a part of a metropolitan curriculum largely defined for students in cities such as Bangkok, Chaing Mai, and Nakhonrachasrima, with limited relevance for the population in other cities and provinces of the nation. This relevance becomes evident when teachers look for English language course materials that can be meaningfully used to illustrate the everyday living activities of children in their classrooms. This lack of English language course materials combined with the difficulties teachers face to teach a language in which they have limited mastery needs to be overcome. Clayton and Conley (1998), also workshop facilitators from BOET, emphasized that many Thai teachers involved in the workshops had only a basic level of fluency in English. From workshop participants these authors found that only a small number of teachers majored in English at college or university; and only a few had found opportunities to use English for genuinely communicative approaches (p. 24).

At the secondary education level, CLT was introduced by the Ministry of Education in 1985, when it established a nationwide project known as the Project for Improvement of Secondary English Teaching (PISET). This project was supported by the British government. That support ended seven years later, in 1992. Today PISET is run by the Thai government. Hayes (1992), a lecturer of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) in the Department of International Education, School of Education, University of Leeds, England,

and involved in the PISET project, was very critical of the project when he wrote that the mode of the project had been largely ineffective in altering teaching behaviours that teachers had developed in the past. The program did not encourage them to move away from teacher directed grammar-translation methods to the more student-centered CLT approach. Hayes was aware that change is a slow process and teachers are comfortable with teaching strategies they previously employed (Hayes, 1995, p. 265).

After all of these experiences, Thai educators should be able to determine which aspects of CLT can be adapted or adopted to suit Thai teaching and learning. It is necessary to look at the conflicts that arise when educators attempt to implement CLT into a traditional language classroom. These conflicts can be classified under three basic elements of classroom culture: beliefs, pedagogy, and structure (Penner, 1995).

Beliefs

> In trying to understand how teachers deal with his/her classroom such as selecting learning activities, preparing students for new learning; presenting learning activities, and checking students' understanding, it is necessary to examine the beliefs and thinking process which underlie teacher's classroom actions. This view of teaching involves a cognitive, an affective, and a behavioral dimension. It is based on the assumption that what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe, and that teacher knowledge and "teacher thinking" provide the underlying framework or schema which guides the teacher's classroom actions (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p.29).

The essential characteristics of the Thai view of learning a language are memorization and repetition. These differ considerably from CLT. CLT views learning as a skill development rather than a knowledge receiving process. However, B-SLIM recognizes both.

In the Thai approach, the primary role of the teacher, whose authority comes from holding all the knowledge, is to transmit that knowledge to students. On the other hand, in CLT the teacher takes on a "helper" role in addition to a "knower" role. This radical change will be difficult for EFL teachers in Thailand to accept, especially, since many Thai teachers are teaching to the limit of their own knowledge of English.

CLT assumes that the student is willing to be an active participant, whereas the traditional approach to teaching in general in Thailand allows for seemingly passive receiver behavior of the student. In a shift from a traditional classroom to a CLT classroom, students also need to learn different learning strategies that are more conducive to the learning activities being taught. When Masur (1998) went to China, she encountered a huge tension between how she taught and how the students were most comfortable learning. After a year in China and two years reflecting in a M.Ed. program she recognized key cultural differences and assumptions about the roles of teachers and students. She realized that implicitly she expected students to welcome her as a "facilitator" of their learning. In turn she realized that the students expected her to be a transmitter of knowledge. These two expectations conflicted. What the experience taught her was that the student must be "taught" how to learn in a way that allows for CLT activities.

Using B-SLIM will help teachers see that sometimes they will continue to play the more "traditional" role of teacher (e.g., during input) while at other times

they must learn to be facilitators (e.g., during intake-"using it" and output). And this approach will ease students into understanding their varied roles as well.

Pedagogy

Pedagogy involves what is done in the classroom: methods, use of materials, objectives, and evaluation (Penner, 1995). In terms of methods and use of materials, textbooks are held in the highest place of authority in Thailand. EFL teachers use textbooks which are prescribed by the school administrator because textbooks are representative of accumulated knowledge and information. Thai EFL teachers have inadequate English language proficiency. They are teaching to the limit of their own knowledge of English. As a consequence, textbooks are invaluable aid to the teachers providing structure and support especially for the inexperienced teachers. In CLT teachers are encouraged to utilize authentic English language materials such as radio broadcasts, newspaper articles, and real-life dialogues. Changing the teaching methods of Thai EFL teachers will be difficult since many have inadequate English language proficiency and target language with limited cultural knowledge, inexperience in creating materials, and lack of sources to produce these materials. Use of B-SLIM will help teachers to see where activities from traditional textbooks have a place (e.g., input and intake) and where new materials are needed (e.g., output).

Structure

The CLT design assumes a certain structure to the EFL classroom. Most North American ESL classes have a maximum of 20 students; thus values

inherent in CLT, such as attention to individual students, are more manageable. In contrast, there are 40 or more students in EFL classrooms in Thailand. Furthermore, Thai teachers fear that in using CLT with a large class they may not have sufficient time to cover the prescribed curriculum. It is hoped that the introduction of interactional activities will help teachers in this regard.

Culture is created over time. It builds and accumulates over hundreds, if not thousands, of years, and is handed down over generations. Attitudes may change from year to year, but the fundamental values of a society do not. Cultural changes occur relatively slowly; like a large body of water, the surface temperature may be affected by the prevailing winds, but the temperature at deeper levels remains more stable (Sower, 1999, p.737). " Change does not usually happen overnight or on a large scale. You can aim to influence and change other, but you can't be sure that you will" (McNiff, 1997, p.30). As a teacher, at least what I want to do is learn/explore: How CLT can be adapted in order to teach EFL to secondary school students in Thailand?

Research Focus

This study aims to explore factors which need to be considered when adapting CLT to the Thai context. More specifically, it aims to identify factors which influenced changes in teachers' and students' attitudes towards change in classroom practice.

Chapter Two

Methodology

Action Research

What is action research?

Since this thesis is about changes in student and teacher attitudes and understandings of classroom practice in the EFL setting, action research was selected as an appropriate methodology. Social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946) is often cited for the early use of the term "action research" and for promoting the concept that social science inquiry leads to social change when that inquiry is conducted by social actors in their own setting (Adelman, 1993). In the 1950s educators saw educational action research as a scientific way to improve instruction in schools. During the 1960s large scale quantitative studies replaced of action research. Interest in action research has been renewed in the last 25 years by the work of Stenhouse (1975) and Elliot (1978) in Britain, by the involvement of practitioners in action research curriculum projects in Australia Carr & Kemmis (1986) and by Schon's work on reflective practitioners (1983) in the United States (Johnson & Button, 2000, p.109).

According to Small (1995) action research is methodologically eclectic, normally more so than traditional academic research. This eclecticism reflects the fact that action researchers often deal with novel problems for which they may have to design new instruments and techniques to gather data. Action researchers must also be sensitive to the needs and perspectives of their non-research collaborators, selecting methods and measures that have a high

degree of face validity and practical utility. McKernan (1991) points out that action research does not have any prescribed methodology. However, the emphasis of action research on practical problems and its commitment to collaboration does mean that some methods tend to prevail. For instance, action research is always conducted in the setting where the problem is encountered, and the focus is usually on a single case or unit. Entire populations such as a classroom or an organization are usually studied rather than a sample drawn from a diverse population. Another unique aspect of action research is that both the research focus and the methodology may change as the inquiry proceeds. Action researchers recognize that as the research process unfolds, the research problem may evolve, requiring a new definition of the situation as well as new methods for understanding it.

Carr and Kemmis (1985) provide the following definition for action research:

> . . . a form of a self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which these practices are carried out (p.220).

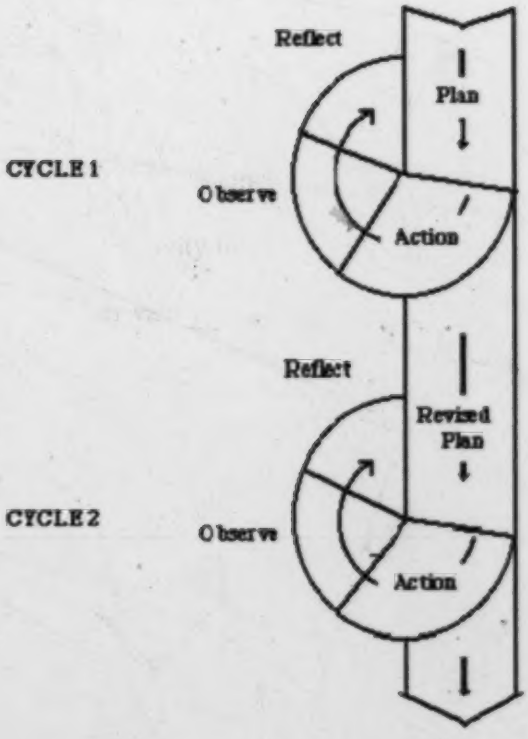
Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) note that the growing interest in action research is the result of a move toward school-based curriculum development and a growing professional awareness among teachers. These trends have given classroom teachers much greater responsibility for curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation, and action research affords a way of experimenting with and evaluating the intervention into curriculum processes.

Kemmis and McTaggart underline the importance of developing a research team in which the researcher is a part of the research. Since a team is built over time and through shared experience, it is imperative that the researcher "gain entry" (trust, respect, and credibility) to the group as quickly as possible.

After gaining entry Kemmis and McTaggart list these four developmental phases for carrying out action research (see figure 2):

Figure 2

Action Research Cycles



(Kemmis and Mc Taggart 1988)

Phase 1 Develop a plan of action to improve what is already happening.

Phase 2 Act to implement the plan.

Phase 3 Observe the effects of action in the context in which it occurs.

Phase 4 Reflect on these effects.

These four phases are meant to form part of an ongoing cycle. Thus, the critical reflection, which occurs during Phase 4 provides a basis for further planning and reflection.

Teacher as Researcher

Action research is a form of practitioner research that can be used to help the teacher examine and improve his/her professional practice (McNiff, 1997). As the name implies, it is also a combination of both action and research. It is an attempt to more fully understand our educational practice in order that we may act in ways that may bring about improvement and understanding (Carson, et. al., 1990). In traditional educational research, the teacher is generally the object of research and, as such, is consumed in someone else's research results (Johnson & Button, 2000). In action research teachers are producers of research. Elliot (1991) points out that classroom action research opens opportunities for teachers to construct knowledge within their own teaching context and to take an active role in learning about teaching. The action research reported in this thesis is a teacher-based classroom action research project that focuses on practice and a discussion of what EFL classroom life looks like from the point of view of a

teacher in Thailand. Moreover, it aims at exploring how Thai EFL teachers can adapt CLT to their context.

Collaborative Action Research

As educators, teachers, principals and university staff, we are likely to better understand and deal with real life classroom and school problems through action research. This understanding and action is accomplished by working together with others in a democratic and collaborative way to address our classroom problems and improve our teaching (Carson, et. al., 1994, p.1). Elliot (1991) suggests that classroom action research is designed as a co-operative, rather than an individualistic, endeavor aimed at generating shared insights and practice.

Collaborative Action Research in Language Learning

Collaborative action research has received increased attention in the language teaching field. At the 1988 TESOL convention, for example, Nunan's research colloquium and keynote presentation was devoted to collaborative research (1989). His description of a collaborative research study between university-based and school-based researchers reinforced some points previously made by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), particularly those points that relate to an approach to establishing a working climate for conducting collaborative research. My research project is aimed at gathering the teachers' perspective on the development of EFL classroom practices in Thailand.

Savignon (1991) reminds us that CLT is an understanding of language learning as both educational and political processes. Viewed from a multicultural

national as well as an international perspective, its diverse sociopolitical context mandates not only a diverse set of language learning goals, but also a diverse set of learning strategies. Program design and implementation depend on negotiation between policy makers, linguistic researchers, and teachers. And evaluation of program success requires a similar collaborative effort (p.266).

In this action research project I, as a researcher, collaborated with four EFL teachers and their grade seven, eight, and nine students at the laboratory school attached to Mahasarakham University, Thailand for three months (see Project Schedule in Appendix A). The four EFL teachers, with whom I collaborate are employed by the laboratory school because of their competency in this academic subject. Their teaching experience ranges from one to three years. Two of them are females and two are males. They are considered to be relatively novice teachers because of their limited teaching experience. Their ages range between 24-26 years. All are graduates of the Faculty of Humanities, Mahasarakham University, where they took course work in linguistics, literature, phonetics, and translation.

Although, based on their university preparation they were considered competent in their subject or content knowledge, and as experienced teachers all shared pedagogical knowledge, from my perspective prior to this project, they had limited pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Shulman, 1986). In other words, they were unaware of how they, as teachers, could facilitate the learning of their specific subject -EFL- to a specific age group within a specific instructional structure or setting. PCK includes the best ways a teacher can help

students understand, learn, and remember challenging concepts in a specific subject area (Bilash, 2000). A major shortcoming I observed about these teachers was that they had a low level understanding and minimal repertoire of methods for presenting concepts to students to facilitate their learning. Thus, these EFL teachers employed methods of teaching used by their own secondary school teachers. For instance, in the first week of the project, I observed that rote learning, like grammar translation and rote memorization, was the primary method of teaching used by these teachers, probably teaching methods picked up from their own teachers. Although when the national curriculum was changed in 1996 it placed heavy emphasis on CLT, teachers seemed to lack a clear concept or understanding of what CLT is. Thus, the first step for me was to plan and facilitate informational workshops in order to introduce action research methodology to the four EFL teachers. These workshops focused on the theoretical and practical sides of the principles of CLT, B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI.

Leo-Nyquist and Rich (1998) point out that to conduct collaborative action research students should become involved in ongoing evaluation and collaboration. They also point out that the results of these evaluative expectations will help steer team collaboration. The student cohort for my project consisted of 250 students in grades 7/1, 7/3, 8/1, 8/3, 9/1, 9/2, and 9/4 enrolled at Mahasarakham University Laboratory School. Since teacher educators from the Faculty of Education generally use this school to try out the latest methods of teaching, the students are familiar with the learner-centered approach to learning from which they benefit.

To conduct this research I have served as a researcher, observer, interviewer, model teacher, organizer and a workshop facilitator. For the past five years I served in a dual capacity, teaching EFL courses in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction of the university, as well as teaching seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students EFL at the laboratory school. Thus, this past experience in the laboratory school meant that I easily "gained entry".

Action Research Activities

This research project drew upon numerous sources of data to explore both how CLT was adapted for the EFL classroom in Thailand and the factors which need to be considered when adapting CLT to the Thai context. More specifically, this study aims to identify factors which influence changes in teachers' and students' attitudes towards change in classroom practice. The four EFL teachers, 250 students, and I engaged in a variety of collaborative activities. Data was drawn from workshops, conversations with students, conversations with teachers, students' journals, teachers' journals as well as my own journal, and observations.

Workshops

Williams (1994) suggests that English language teaching (ELT) teacher training programs should involve participation which include brainstorming ideas, exchanging views and demonstrating activities. As the team leader and workshop facilitator, I worked with the four EFL teachers four hours a day from 5 P.M. to 9 P.M. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday for a period of two weeks (see Workshop Schedule in Appendix B). During the first week we discussed the

action research methodology, the principles of CLT, B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI. During the second week the researcher modeled and demonstrated B-SLIM in the four EFL teachers' classrooms. The next step saw the four EFL teachers prepare activities and materials based on B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI according to the levels they taught and presented their work to the researcher for comments.

After the workshops each teacher implemented B-SLIM to two classes, four hours a week, for two months. During the implementation of this model these teachers and their students were observed and videotaped by the researcher (see Observation Schedule in Appendix C). The results of these observations were recorded in the researcher's journal for later analysis and interpretation. This journal was used to record other pertinent data which were also analyzed. The researcher also recorded and facilitated classroom practice. By assisting, guiding, supporting, and encouraging the teachers, they began to use/adapt B-SLIM to their own classrooms in order to better understand classroom teaching and learning, and to bring about change in practice of teaching English as a foreign language.

After each observation week the research team held a meeting to discuss and reflect upon that week's practice. Relevant matters brought up at these meetings were subsequently implemented in the classrooms to enhance teaching practice.

Conversations

Conversation plays an important part in action research (McNiff, 1997; Altrichter, et. al., 1993). Carson (1986) insists on the potential of conversation, saying that conversation is a rich, friendly and natural form of verbal intercourse, which allows for an easy exchange of experience (p.82). In the case of my research, I used conversation as a tool to reflect upon classroom practice. Conversations with the four EFL teachers involved (a) sharing the collected data, (b) discussing that data with the team, and (c) carrying the outcome back to the classroom to enhance practice and assist in the implementation of change. I also had informal conversations with some of the students who shared ideas about the CLT classroom and its influence on learning EFL.

Teacher/Student's Journals

The four EFL teachers and 250 students were asked to write at least a page or two during each week of the study. The journal entries consisted of thoughts, problems, queries, doubts, and frustrations they encountered during that week. In turn, the researcher responded by writing back to the participants in his/her journal, responding carefully to the participants' thoughts. These responses were not critical or dogmatic; they were sympathetic and supportive. In recording their thoughts participants used both English and Thai.

Researcher' s Journal

My journal consisted of a series of field notes that chronicled events, questions, and observations that I made during the workshops and implementation of B-SLIM in the EFL classroom.

Observations and Use of Videotapes/Photos

There is no substitute for direct observation as a way of finding out about the dynamics that exist in a language classroom. "Certainly if teachers want to enrich their understanding of language learning and teaching, they need to spend time looking into the atmosphere of the classroom" (Nunan, 1989, p.76). Mazzillo (1994) maintains that action research is an investigation into any classroom issue that seems to puzzle teachers. Using a simple tool like observation teachers can find satisfactory answers to that puzzle.

Altrichter et al., (1993) posit that teachers/researchers should use systematic or formal observation procedures to overcome diffusion and bias of informal observation. "Bearing in mind that formal observational procedures can be too complex to use while attending to everything else going on in the classroom, and that informal observation is an integral part of everyday teaching" (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.77), I integrated both formal and informal observation in this study. Observation categories were adapted from Bilash (2000), Nunan & Lamb (1996), and Wajnryb (1992) and included observing learners, teacher language, learning environment, teaching skills and strategies, and classroom management (see Appendix D).

Using a video camera in the classroom has both advantages and disadvantages. As an advantage it provides the researcher with the "opportunity . . .to conduct a descriptive and systematic examination of what is observed in the classroom" (Dimmitt & Nakamura, 1997, p.23). Another advantage is the playback capacity of the video to review both the verbal and nonverbal

characteristics of teachers and students which is nearest to reality. Facial and other body language features are difficult to record using other observational procedures used with action research. Altrichter et al., (1993) and McNiff (1997) emphatically point out that video recordings can make the context and casual relationship more accessible than any other method of data collecting. Elliott (1991) also presents an advantage of a video recording in its ability for the teacher/researcher to move backward and forward easily and rapidly. These advantages must, however, be weighed against their disadvantages which the researcher must consider if difficulties are to be either avoided or minimized. According to Altrichter et al., (1993) a major disadvantage of using video is that the equipment involved can be very distractive in the classroom. Another disadvantage is the limited radius of camera microphone range (leading to the need for additional high microphone to record verbal inaction). These authors also suggest that the researcher must confront ethical considerations of using video to collect data. Because of the camera's ability to record authentic events as they occur there is the chance that the privacy of the participants may be invaded. I used videotapes and photos during classroom observations so that I could refer back to these technologies and so that teachers could view themselves and discuss and reflect upon what they saw.

Data Collecting

Because different 'lenses' or perspectives result from the use of different methods of data collection (Morse, 1994, p.224), a good action researcher develops monitoring skills that will enable him/her to triangulate data from more

than one source (McNiff, 1997, p.42). Triangulation according to Altrichter, et. al., (1993) is an important method for contrasting and comparing different accounts of the same situation by identifying and accounting for differences in perspectives of participants. For my study, data from the following sources were collected and analyzed to record the influence of implementing CLT (B-SLIM) in the EFL classroom in Thailand. These sources included: conversations with students, conversations with teachers, students' journals, teachers' journals, researcher's journal, and formal and informal observations through the support of video recording and photography.

Ethics

To develop mutual trust and openness, the research team established a clear mission statement as follows. They:

a) worked together as equals;

b) shared a love of teaching and an understanding of what and how the students learn;

c) worked as a team based on understanding, caring, and sharing. We entered the concept of collaboration without vested interest or professional bias;

d) respected each other's opinions; and

e) allowed the questions and issues to emerge gradually and to be shaped equally by all members of team.

In addition, the team negotiated the procedures, time arrangements and the roles that each member of the team had in the research. The four EFL

teachers reported that they were comfortable with the procedures of the research and were in full command of their involvement in the study. They had the right to withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice and this was made clear to them throughout the project.

Because of the differential status between children and adults, most people recognize a degree of coercion when adults ask children to participate in research. To avoid coercion the 250 students might face when asked to participate in this project, parental consent was required. A copy of the letter of consent was distributed in class by the teacher. Students were asked to take home the letter, have it signed by a parent and return it to the school. Signed consent letters were collected by the four EFL teachers. The parental consent letter indicated that students could withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice. These letters will be retained by the researcher for five years after the completion of the study. Then they will be destroyed. This study was also given the approval of the Department of Secondary Education Ethics Review committee.

Teacher Participants

For purposes of anonymity, the four EFL teachers were named Nuy, Nong, Noi, Mon (pseudonyms).

Nuy is a quiet man and a hard working teacher. He is 26 years old. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English from the Faculty of Humanities, Mahasarakham University. He is doing a master's degree in English. He has been teaching English for three years and he is chair of a foreign language

department at the laboratory school. He has taught grades 7-12, and was teaching grade 7 and 8 when this study was conducted. Nuy says the next major effort after his master's degree will be to seek an opportunity to further his study in the area of instruction and curriculum.

Nong is a 25 year old graduate of the Faculty of Humanities, Mahasarakham University. Her major was English. Currently, she is completing the requirements for a master's degree at the university. She has been teaching English for two years, and has taught grades 7-12. She was teaching grades 9 and 10 when this study was done. Nong likes what she is doing now, and enjoys being a teacher.

Noi is 26 years old, holds a Bachelor's degree in English from the Faculty of Humanities, Mahasarakham University, and is doing a master's degree in English. She has been teaching English for three years, and has taught grades 7-12. She was teaching grades 8-12 when this study was conducted. Noi considers herself rich in language skills but weak in language teaching skills. She wishes to learn more about language learning and teaching. After completing the requirements for the master's degree, she plans to work toward a doctoral degree in applied linguistics.

Mon is 24 years old. He is very outspoken and easy to talk to. He graduated from the Faculty of Humanities, Mahasarakham University in English, has been teaching for one year, and was teaching grade 7 at the time of the study. Mon is very good at English grammar and writing. His goal is to obtain a master's degree and eventually work on English Education..

The Laboratory School/Students

The laboratory school is under the supervision of the Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University. The school was established in 1997 with the following purposes: (a) to serve as a venue for training student teachers; (b) to provide the opportunity to observe techniques and educational administration; (c) to promote and conduct educational research; and (d) to serve as a model of quality education, taking into consideration the particular conditions within the country. The laboratory school has a professional and non-professional staff of 35, with 820 students, and four EFL teachers. This school offers programs in junior high school (lower secondary) from grade seven through to grade nine. Following grade nine there are three years of senior high school (upper secondary) – grades 10, 11, and 12. The average class size is between 35-45 students. Three foreign languages – English, French, and Japanese – are available for the students. Most classrooms are adequately equipped and are considered to be very formal. In a formal classroom students are required to stand up to greet the teacher at the beginning and the end of the class. During the class students have to raise their hands and wait for the teacher to call on them before they can speak. Students have to stand up when speaking. Thai is the medium of instruction for English classes. Classes are arranged according to the academic ability of students and are categorized as either 7/1, 7/2, or 7/3. The school week is from Monday through Friday. The school day begins at 8.30 A.M and ends at 3.30 P.M and consists of eight periods per day. A class period is normally 50 minutes in length.

Timelines

The timeline for this study can be divided into four distinct but interrelated phases: the *pre-research phase* which dealt with the preliminaries of conducting the study; the *research phase* which involved the collection of data for the study and is detailed earlier in this chapter; the *analysis phase* where collected data were analyzed and interpreted so that conclusions and recommendations could be made; and the final phase which involved organizing, structuring and presenting the findings in the form of this thesis.

The first phase of the study, the *pre-research phase*, began in January, 2000 when the researcher made contact with the director of the laboratory school, Mahasarakham University, through correspondence requesting permission to involve both the junior high school students of the school enrolled in EFL classes and their teachers (see Appendix E). Accompanying that letter was a copy of the research proposal for the director's information. The permission requested was readily granted. Two weeks later, after the director's approval was given, correspondence was initiated with the four EFL teachers (see Appendix F) requesting that they participate in the study. Accompanying that letter was a copy of the research proposal.

In February, 2000 the four EFL teachers indicated in their correspondence that they would be most willing to be involved in the study. In the interim the researcher prepared the parental consent letter (see Appendix G) that would grant parental permission to involve their child in the research.

In May, 2000, the parental consent letter was sent to the laboratory school for duplication and distribution to the four EFL teachers, who in turn, were asked to distribute the parental consent letter to their students. The students were given a deadline date for return of the letter and asked to return the signed letter to their teachers. The teachers were asked to keep each letter on file until the researcher returned to Thailand on November 29, 2000 to begin conducting workshops – the beginning phase for collecting data for the study, or phase two of the research.

Most of the citations of students in this thesis have been translated from Thai into English by the author.

Summary

The thesis aims to explore factors which need to be considered when adapting CLT to the Thai context. More specifically, it aims to identify factors which influenced changes in teachers' and students' attitudes towards change in classroom practice. Thus, action research was determined to be an appropriate methodology to explore this area. In this action research project the researcher collaborated with four EFL teachers and the 250 junior high school students enrolled in grades 7/1, 7/3, 8/1, 8/3, 9/1, 9/2 and 9/4 at the laboratory school attached to Mahasarakham University, Thailand. This research project drew upon six sources to collect data to explore how CLT was adapted in EFL classrooms in Thailand. To collect these data, the four EFL teachers, and 250 students and I engaged in a variety of collaborative activities such as conversations with students, conversations with teachers, writing in a journal

(researcher's, students', and teachers'), observing/reflecting using field notes and videotapes and photography. To translate CLT from theory to practice I used B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI.

Chapter Three

Action Research Cycles

This chapter will discuss the seven cycles that were involved in conducting the action research. The first was to set up the study, the second was to gain entry and the third was workshops and implementation of B-SLIM week one remaining four cycles were "monitoring" (developing nine teaching skills; improving six teaching skills; evaluation; and strong examination system) cycles. Each cycle consisted of a plan, actions, observations/findings, reflections/insights, and new questions which were formulated from the challenges that both students and teachers had to face and to solve. In order to better understand the seven action research cycles the background of learning and teaching English in Thailand must be taken into consideration.

Background

Almost all teachers in Thailand believe that learning English is learning knowledge, and that teachers of English have that knowledge and learners do not. Therefore teachers perceive that it is their role to impart this knowledge to the learners. Thus, in Thailand today learning a language consists of students learning the structural rules and vocabulary of the language through such activities as memorization, reading, and writing and parroting what was learned. Since these approaches to learning English do not place emphasis on communicative activities, Thai students are good at memorizing the skills of

grammar, but they are unable to use these skills to communicate effectively with others.

A number of both government and private projects have been established in Thailand in order to improve EFL learning. Because of its concern and in an effort to help solve this problem the Ministry of Education (1996) revised the EFL curriculum. The main aim of the revised curriculum was to enable learners to use English in socio-culturally and cognitively appropriate ways in a variety of everyday contexts. Consequently, learning/teaching English in Thailand now places emphasis on communicative competence which involves the development of four areas of knowledge and skills. These included: (a) grammatical competence; (b) sociolinguistic competence; (c) discourse competence; and (d) strategic competence. Since EFL teachers in Thailand are well aware that there exists a gap between linguistic knowledge and communicative competence, many are ready to change.

Cycle One: Setting Up the Study

Since this thesis was about changes in student and teacher attitudes and understandings of classroom practice in the EFL setting, action research was selected as an appropriate methodology. As has been discussed, action research is a form of practitioner research that can help teachers examine and improve their professional practice (McNiff, 1997). Through a combination of both action and research, it helps teachers to more fully understand educational practice in order that we may act in ways that may bring about improvement and

understanding (Carson, et. al., 1990). My teacher-based classroom action research project aims to explore factors which need to be considered when adapting CLT to the Thai context. More specifically, it aims to identify factors which influence changes in students' and teachers' attitudes towards change in classroom practice.

Since many EFL teachers in Thailand recognize the need to change, the time is right to encourage them to do so. To bridge the gap between communicative competence and linguistic competence EFL teachers need to understand what CLT "looks like" in a classroom setting. The following tools helped me and my colleagues in Thailand to translate CLT from theory to practice:

a) Bilash's Second Language Instructional Model (B-SLIM)

b) Bilash's criteria for communicative activities (BCCA)

c) Gardner's multiple intelligences (GMI)

Action

Firstly, to establish a background for the study I took courses, immersed myself in English, shared ideas with groups of graduate students, and undertook library research directed at action research and CLT. After selecting and developing action research I presented my ideas for the research to my thesis advisor for feedback. These ideas were written in the form of a candidacy paper which was presented to the advisor for comment and critique. However, because of my limitation in the English language and Canadian academic culture, it was

difficult for me to formulate and develop each step of the research. I spent a lot of time and energy when I had to deal with oral and written work.

Reflection

The candidacy paper was presented to a committee for feedback and approval. Now I had a clear direction of what I would do in Thailand. The next step was to locate a school to conduct the research and gain entry into that school.

Cycle Two: Gaining Entry

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) underline the importance of developing a research team in which the researcher is a part of the research. Since a team is built over time and through shared experience it is imperative that the researcher "gain entry" to the group as quickly as possible. Also, the researcher cannot complete his/her project if he/she does not have the necessary trust, respect, and credibility of the people involved in the research.

For the past five years I served in a dual capacity teaching EFL courses to university students enrolled in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham, University, as well as teaching seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students EFL at the laboratory school attached to the university. This experience served me well in meeting the four EFL teachers in the school and inviting them to be a part of the action research team.

Action

For my project to succeed I had to negotiate access to the classrooms of the laboratory school. This negotiation began in January, 2000, when I sent a letter of consent to the director of the laboratory school requesting permission to involve the EFL teachers and their students. Accompanying this letter was a copy of the research proposal. Two weeks later, when I received the director's approval, correspondence was sent to the four EFL teachers requesting their cooperation in the study. Enclosed in each letter was a copy of the research proposal.

The 250 junior high school students enrolled in seventh, eighth, and ninth grade EFL classes composed the student cohort for the study. Because of the differential between children and adults, most people recognize a degree of coercion when adults ask children to participate in research. For this reason, parental consent was required. A parental letter of consent was sent to the four EFL teachers who were asked to distribute the letter to parents through the students. In the letter parents were asked to return the signed letter to the researcher. Both student and teacher participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time during the study without prejudice.

Results

In February, 2000, I was granted permission by the director of the laboratory school to conduct an action research project in this school. In March,

2000, the four EFL teachers indicated that they would be most willing to be involved in the study. Students were asked to take home the letters of consent to their parents, have a parent sign the letter and return it to the four EFL teachers. The signed consent letter was kept on file by the four EFL teachers until the researcher returned to Thailand on November 29, 2000.

Cycle Three: Workshops and Implementation of B-SLIM Week One

Plan

The first step for me was to observe the four EFL teachers' classrooms prior to the implementation of B-SLIM for one week as well as to ask these teachers to describe in words what they were doing in classrooms and what their students were capable of doing in English. Since the four EFL teachers seemed to lack a clear concept or understanding of CLT, the second step for this cycle was for the researcher to plan and facilitate informational workshops. The program of the workshops consisted of introducing, previewing action research methodology, discussing the principles of CLT, and presenting B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI to the teachers. Therefore, the action phase for this cycle was divided into two parts. First, workshops were conducted. Second, B-SLIM was implemented during week one of classroom activity.

Action

To conduct workshops I served as the team leader and facilitator and for two weeks worked with the four EFL teachers four hours a day from 5 P.M to 9 P.M on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. During the first week the team discussed

the action research methodology, the principles of CLT, B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI. During the second week the researcher modeled B-SLIM in the four EFL teachers' classrooms. Then the four EFL teachers were required to prepare activities and materials for the first observation week according to grade levels they taught based on B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI.

Following the workshop each teacher had to implement B-SLIM with two classes four hours a week. During the implementation phase of B-SLIM these teachers and their students were observed and videotaped by the researcher. After each week of observation the researcher and the four EFL teachers held a meeting which the team referred to as "conversation week" to discuss and reflect upon their practice. The four EFL teachers brought results of these meetings to their classrooms to enhance their teaching practice.

Observations/Findings

In observations/findings section I will present a) practical issues, b) teaches' feedback, and c) students' feedback.

As I began to work with the four EFL teachers, I became aware of a number of practical issues that needed to be faced. First, since the four EFL teachers were busy, I could not follow the prescribed schedule which I had established before starting the project. Thus, the timeline for the research had to be altered in order to meet the needs and schedules of the four EFL teachers (such change is typical collaborative of action research project). Second, I wanted to encourage new forms of collaboration and openness to feedback among the four EFL

teachers which was not a simple transition. I felt a need to communicate clearly (the value of practice) with the teachers. Through reflect on their teaching practice and self observe, I wanted them to feel a sense of ownership of the project. One advantage to this was the fact that I considered these teachers to be novice teachers because of their minimal teaching experience. Implementing this project with these novice teachers was easier than it would have been with veteran teachers, because in my opinion, beginning teachers enter the profession with an understanding that they will grow and develop with experience and have the desire to do so. Thus, the collaborative project helped to support their professional development. They required a model that was systematic and easy to understand and to use. They all agreed that B-SLIM was a user – friendly approach for the EFL classrooms because it allowed them to continue to play the more "traditional" role of teacher (e.g., during input) while at the same time learning to be facilitators (e.g., during intake-using it and output).

During the first week we discussed the principles related to CLT, B-SLIM, BCCA, GMI. We spent two hours discussing CLT. The discussion focused on communicative competence and characteristics of CLT. The teachers appeared to understand the concept of CLT. Prior to this workshop they thought that CLT concentrated on appropriateness and fluency and neglected accuracy. This can be seen in Noi's comments after the first day of the workshops "Before attending this project, I thought that CLT did not teach grammar and only taught speaking. I did not think that was a good way to teach our students grammar . . ." Subsequently the content of the workshops focused on B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI.

It was my perception following the workshops that the teachers responded positively to the new approach. I noticed during the workshops that among the teachers, men responded more actively than did women.

I found implementing this collaborative project was a more complex process than I anticipated, but one that was well worth the time and the effort. As one teacher commented during the conversation session:

> *At first I had a lot of reservations about participating in this project because I am busy and I never conduct research before. Now I realize that the project has helped me see past some blind spots in my teaching. It has been difficult to open up my classroom to a colleague, I am gaining a sense of confidence, which outweighs the anxiety. Most of all, I have increased awareness of the importance of actively "thinking" about my teaching (Noi, January 2, 2001).*

Almost all of the activities the teachers used with their classes were designed to involve students and motivated them to be interested in lessons. These activities were interactive, student centered, and communicative – Nuy used a memory game during the comprehensible input stage to help the students understand the pattern of the present continuous tense and games and mimes during the "getting it" stage to help his students understand the use of the infinitive (V+ing). These activities were also designed to encourage students to use the new grammar, function, and vocabulary – Mon used pair work and group work to teach the past simple tense; Nong used games to teach vocabulary. These activities helped the students gain confidence, experiment with saying new words and sentences, and assimilate these words and sentences into their own experience. Mon allowed his students to ask and answer questions about

what they did during their weekend. However, according to the goals of "intake" not all activities have to be interactive so sometimes the teachers asked the students to complete exercises individually. According to GMI teachers also need to provide a variety of activities to meet all students' learning styles. To do this Nuy used a variety of activities to teach the present continuous tense (games, mimes, and songs). However, Mon, Nong, and Noi needed to provide a variety of activities for their students for the next cycle.

From conversations I had with 9/2 students I found that these students liked to listen to pop and rock music. When they listened to the songs they could sing along very well. One student mentioned this during a conversation we had:

> *I like the MTV channel because it helps me improve my listening. I also like to listen to songs. I learn English from the songs . . .I really want my teacher to use songs in our class (student's journal).*

I observed that some activities were relatively easy for strong students. This observation was given support from a review of student journals. During this cycle, I found that journal entries of 10 students supported this observation when they wrote:

> *I like the way my teacher teaches but I think sometimes it is too easy for me (student's journal).*

> *. . . I enjoy playing games but some games do not interest me. They are o.k for elementary school students not for us. We want to do something more exciting and challenging (student's journal).*

From students' journals, the four EFL teachers and I came to the conclusion that the overall student comments for this cycle were positive. The

students frequently mentioned that the activities were motivating, helped to increasing their use of English and were fun to do. This was evident from comments made in the students' journals:

> *Today I enjoyed walking around talking with my friends about what we did during the weekend. We spoke English a lot. My teacher was very kind to us. She did not criticize us anymore when we made a mistake (student's journal).*
>
> *English subject? Oh! very exciting. We did role play about job application. I acted as an interviewer. I asked lots of questions. I like it because our teacher gave us opportunities to practice our English (student's journal).*
>
> *Today I had a very good time. Two hours for English class was worthwhile (student's journal).*

Reflections/ Insights

I observed that during this cycle of the project the teachers did very well during the comprehensible input (presentation) phase – a traditional role of teachers. However, they needed to learn to become facilitators. From a review of observations I made, teachers' journals, and conversations I had with the teachers I found that the teaching skills they needed to develop were (a) distinguishing between "getting it" and "using it" activities; (b) selecting "getting it" and "using it" activities and preparing materials according to themes; (c) making input comprehensible by modeling during the comprehensible input stage and demonstrating during the "getting it" stage; (d) using a variety of interactional activities, low risk high security/fun/motivating and interesting and using authentic materials; (e) organizing and monitoring pair and group work; (f) giving appropriate time for each activity based on students' abilities; (g) using L2; (h)

giving praise and encouragement as well as providing a safe environment for the students to practice; and (i) minimizing teacher talk time (TTT). Three teachers' journals supported this final observation:

> *Today I did a mistake during the class. I think I talked too much. I should provide more activities for my students (Noi, December 30, 2000).*
>
> *. . .I think I am not ready enough for this class. Say, I have no materials for my students (Mon, December 28, 2000).*
>
> *Oh! I forgot to tell you that I spent too much time for some activities. Next time I'll fix the time for each activity (Nuy, December 28, 2000).*

B-SLIM was appropriate for both strong (7/1, 8/1, 9/1) and weak (7/3, 8/3, 92, and 9/4) students. Students responded very actively. However, I observed that the weaker students needed more time to do each activity, particularly during the "using it" stage. In addition they needed more "getting it" activities and guidance to help them understand input. What Mon wrote in his journal for December 29, 2000 gave support to this observation:

> *What I have taught 7/3 students was quite similar to one in 7/1 students. I used the same activities. However, this time I had to prepare more materials and provide more time for them to do activities. Most of them are rather poor in English but if I gave them more time added more getting it activities it's much easier for them to get it. They seemed to be very active today and wanted to study. They could manage their activities within given time. All in all, they have done a very great job today and I am very impressed. I wish they always were like this (Mon, December 29, 200).*

One thing that surprised me was that weak students liked kinesthetic activities such as games, acting, and mimes. During the observation week prior to the implementation of B-SLIM I noticed that grade 7/3, 8/3, 9/2 and 9/4 students responded passively in class. There was a lack of response to the

questions asked. These students sat passively doing nothing but listening or sometimes I found them daydreaming. However, when the teachers introduced competitive games during the "getting it" stage, these students responded actively. As I wrote in my journal:

> *There was active participation among all the groups and although students had to speak/answer questions in English, they did not hesitate to answer those questions. It seemed that they were more concerned how to beat the other groups than the mistake they made in speaking and writing English (researcher's journal, December 30, 2000).*

Furthermore, I found that making video recordings of the class provided me with very useful information that I could continually review. I used this technology to collect data and convey it to the teachers and keep my supervisor in touch with the project. We watched videos and critiqued teacher and student performance during the conversation phase. It helped members of the team to identify details and certain things which were relevant and considered important (e.g., the verbal exchange between students during group work discussion).

New Question

From working with the teachers and the students during this cycle I found that the teachers needed to develop the following nine teaching skills:

a) distinguishing between "getting it" and "using it" activities;

b) selecting "getting it" and "using it" activities and preparing materials according to selected themes;

c) making input comprehensible by modeling during the comprehensible input stage and demonstrating during the "getting it" stage;

d) organizing and monitoring pair and group work;

e) using a variety of interactional activities, low risk high security/motivating/fun and interesting and using authentic materials;

f) giving appropriate time for each activity based on the students' abilities;

g) using L2

h) giving praise, encouragement as well as providing safe environment for the students to practice;

i) minimizing TTT

Cycle Four: Monitoring One: Developing Nine Teaching Skills

Meeting One

The meeting began with the sharing of collected data. To do this the researcher and the teachers watched videotapes showing teacher and student performance. These videos were taped during the observation week by the researcher. After viewing the videos, time was set aside for commentary and discussion by the researcher and the teachers. The themes of the discussion focused on how to improve the nine teaching skills. For part of the discussion I gave an explanation as to why teachers need to structure/create three or four intake "getting it/using it" activities for one theme. According to B-SLIM intake refers to the time and process of "learning" content. Learners will not get all of the input teachers present at once. Teachers need to make sure that learners get the input and have opportunities to practice the input until they have learned it. Furthermore, I reviewed and demonstrated how to design communicative

activities based on BCCA and GMI. Then the last hour the time was set aside for the teachers to practice assessing "getting it" and "using it" activities according to Bilash's chart of criteria for communicative activities – The teachers assessed 2-3 "getting it" and "using it" activities which they had selected from textbooks. I also encouraged the teachers to use authentic materials which they could provide for the students or they could encourage the students to bring their own authentic materials (newspaper, stamps, and tickets).

Action

After the meeting the teachers prepared activities and materials for the second observation week according to the feedback and results of the meeting and then presented their work to the researcher for comments. Following this the teachers implemented B-SLIM in their classrooms to improve their nine teaching skills.

Observations/Findings

During this cycle I noticed that the teachers showed improvement over the previous cycle especially in terms of designing "getting it" activities according to the selected themes. However, during the conversation session the teachers made the comment that they were aware of B-SLIM, but were unclear how to design activities that were relevant to the four language skills. In addition, the teachers encountered difficulties in selecting texts, materials and activities that would match the themes (input). The themes came from three sources: the researcher's response to students' journals; conversations the researcher had with some of the students; and the teachers asked the students to select themes

before preparing activities and materials for each observation week. For instance, Nuy had difficulty finding reading passages and listening texts for "using it" activities related to the present continuous tense; Mon took a long time locating both tape recordings and video recordings for "using it" activities to teach the past simple tense.

I also observed that during the comprehensible input stage the students were unclear about the lesson and were struggling with vocabulary that was unfamiliar to them because some teachers were unable to make the input comprehensible. This observation applied to low level learners. The teachers still needed to improve skills such as using more L2, giving praise and encouragement, modeling during the comprehensible input stage, minimizing TTT and demonstrating the lessons during the getting it stage. My journal of January 12, 2001, states:

> *The teachers attempted to use English in their classrooms but they could do so for only for 10-20 minutes because of their limitation in the English language. This is very common. Most EFL teachers in Thailand do not use English as the medium of instruction for most of their teaching time (researcher's journal, January 12, 2001).*

The following was taken from a student journal which confirmed the necessity of modeling and demonstrating:

> *Today we learned about the past simple tense. It was very different from the past. You know, instead of sitting and listening to the teacher, she let us get up and do activities. Unfortunately, the task she gave us was very difficult. A lot of vocabulary was not familiar to me. I wanted our teacher to explain how to do the task and introduce vocabulary before she asked us to do it (student's journal).*

On January 8, 2001, Noi wrote in her journal:

> *From watching videos, there were a lot of mistakes in my class that day. My students seemed to be confused when they were asked to do activities. I think I need to model and demonstrate and give them more details before they do activities (Noi, January 8, 2001).*

In terms of minimizing TTT I found that during the comprehensible input stage teachers spent an inordinate amount of time explaining the lesson to the students. To minimize teacher talk time, I suggested that they might use visuals, pictures or charts to support their explanation.

Nevertheless, the teachers showed continuous improvement especially in group work and pair work management. From observations and a review of my journal entries, and the entries that appeared in the teachers' journal, I noticed that the teachers used a variety of activities that would appeal to certain student learning styles. Nuy used role play for "using it" activities to teach the present continuous tense and Mon let students walk around to interview friends for "using it activities" (supporting BCCA on the importance of interaction in a communicative activity). However, all of the activities selected and used by the teachers during this week lacked the spatial and musical aspects of GMI.

I noticed that students were happy to learn. The classroom atmosphere was very warm and friendly. Both boys and girls responded actively. The girls responded more actively than did the boys. They asked more questions and volunteered more often than did the boys. However, both the girls and the boys were also willing to take a risk when they responded, as illustrated in my journal entry for January 12, 2001:

I had the impression that 8/3 students have a relatively lower standard of spoken English and less self-confidence in answering questions. However, they did show positive responses and effort in the whole lesson. In fact, they felt quite excited while they were doing activities. Maybe the word "competition" gave them the stimulus to try harder (researcher's journal, January 12, 2001).

Furthermore, what Nuy wrote in his journal for January 11, 2001 supported the observation I made:

I used a memory game to review the use of gerund (Verb + ing + object).To do this I asked my students to divide into two groups of boys and girls. They participated so well. What surprised me was 8/3 students were eager to participate. They enjoyed playing games (Nuy, January 11, 2001).

Reflections/Insights

The significant thing I noticed during this cycle was that all of the teachers had some difficulty distinguishing between "getting it" and "using it" activities. The following is an excerpt from a conversation with the teachers about this confusion:

Nong: I am struggling with selecting "getting it" and "using it" activities. What I understand is "getting it" activities the teacher controls class, and "using it" activities the teacher just guides and helps students, right?

Mon: You know? Last week I had a problem with "getting it" activities. They did not work well. Students were not eager to participate. At first I thought they were lazy but when I asked them after class they said they really wanted to participate but they did not know how to do. Do they need more examples or I have to demonstrate?

Noi: I am not sure. I think before asking students do "using it" we need to make sure that they understand everything during "getting it", right? and "using it" we allow them to practice.

From the data in students' journals and conversations I had with some students I would approximate tnat 80 per cent of the students liked B-SLIM

because this model: (a) helped them understand difficult input such as grammar and listening skills; (b) provided a variety of activities which motivated them to be interested in learning the lesson; (c) provided a friendly learning atmosphere which reduced their anxiety. The remaining 20 per cent that did not like this model had the following concerns:

a) A few weak students felt uncomfortable participating in classroom activities because they were shy and lacked self- confidence.

b) The strong students that had a traditional orientation towards learning were unfamiliar with this model.

c) The strong students who had test anxiety commented that CLT activities were a waste of time because they only needed to learn what was necessary to pass English examinations.

I concluded that we had achieve an improvement of organizing and monitoring pair and group work; using a variety of interactional activities, low risk high security/motivating/fun and interesting and using authentic materials; and giving praise, encouragements as well as providing safe environment for the students to practice for the next cycle the teachers had to improve the following six of the nine teaching skills:

a) distinguishing between "getting it" and "using it" activities;

b) selecting "getting it" and "using it" activities and preparing materials according to selected themes;

c) making input comprehensible by modeling during the comprehensible stage and demonstrating during the "getting it" stage;

d) giving appropriate time for each activity based on students' abilities;

e) using L2;

f) minimizing TTT.

New Question

This new question arose from working with the teachers during this cycle "How can I help these teachers to improve the above six teaching skills?"

Cycle Five: Monitoring Two: Improving Six Teaching Skills

Meeting Two

The second meeting began at 6.00 P.M. on January 15, 2001 when the researcher and the teachers reviewed the videos of their teaching. Each teacher was asked to provide suggestions, criticisms and comments about their recorded teaching performance. This lasted until 9.00 P.M. For the next hour we shared materials and activities that could be used with the students (e.g., tape recordings, videos, newspapers, songs and games). Finally, I presented additional details about how teachers could encourage students to participate in classroom activities and how to select "getting it" and "using it" activities that would coincide with the levels of students' abilities. We also reviewed the design of communicative activities based on BCCA and GMI as well as the differences between "getting it" and "using it" activities. I provided the teachers with some activities and materials and also suggested ways for them to select activities from textbooks.

From the atmosphere of the second meeting I felt that the teachers were becoming more trusting of me. The collaborative relationship that was being

developed between me and the teachers began to solidify from the first meeting. The teachers felt much more comfortable and at ease in sharing their ideas with the researcher and with their colleagues. This was probably because they began to accept me as a member of the team that worked together as equals to form equality that was based on understanding, caring, and sharing. Historically, professors of the university had control over the laboratory school and were known to impose their biased agendas on the teachers of the school without negotiating with them. Negotiation and teacher empowerment seemed to be important to developing this trust.

Action

Following the meeting each teacher prepared activities and materials for the third observation week according to the feedback and results of these meetings and presented their work to the researcher for comments. Activities and materials the teachers prepared for their students were communicative. However, they prepared "getting it " activities which were " high risk". According to B-SLIM during the getting it stage teachers must structure activities (high structure teaching) in order to help learners "get" the input. For example, Mon needed to provide an interview chart for the students when he designed an information gap activity. As a consequence, I spent a lot of time helping the teachers revise their "getting it" activities before they used them in the classroom.

Observations/Findings

To my surprise, I found all of the teachers designed very interesting activities based on BCCA, and GMI. To illustrate, Noi designed "getting it"

activities by using the newspaper to teach the use of the present perfect tense. Mon used a missing gap activity; Nuy used a board game. Nong designed a very interesting "using it" activity. She told her students to work in groups and prepare a role play one week before this class. The students established seven companies for this activity. Two students acted as the owners of each company who were in search of employees. Other students took the role of applicants who wanted to apply for a job and were interviewed by the owners. During conversations with students about this activity most 9/1 students mentioned that they really liked role play because it allowed them to be active participants. These students preferred to be in an English class where there were lots of activities designed to help them improve their abilities to communicate in English. However, several students in this class expressed their concerns about examinations. They indicated that communicative activities consumed a lot of their time. Even though they liked these activities, they wanted to learn what was necessary for them to pass English examinations. The activities they were involved in class had no relationship to what appeared on the exams. A student stated, "I like doing activities which improve my speaking skill but I am afraid I cannot pass the exams. You know, we did not learn anything in class this week that we can use on exams. Our teacher does not teach to the test". In addition, from a review of student journals there were many students who wrote comments about their English evaluations. Two of these students wrote:

> *This week I enjoyed learning English very much. We did a role play. I took the role of an owner of a computer company. I liked speaking English in class . . . We had lots of fun this week but next week we'll have a test. I*

don't want to write an exam. It 's very tough but if I don't do that I won't get any marks (student's journal).

English class this week? Great ! Everybody had a good time. We worked hard at role play. We are happy. We can do it by ourselves ! Actually, we like games, role play and drama but we don't like English test. It's too difficult . . . lots of grammar and reading (student's journal).

Furthermore, during this cycle I observed that the teachers worked very well in terms of encouraging their students, managing group work, and providing a safe environment for students to practice. I was most impressed when I observed Noi creating a very friendly learning atmosphere by giving praise, respecting ideas and opinions of students. This was unusual for Thai students who believe that learning means hard work and sacrifice, and the teachers' job is to reward or punish the performance of the learner. After class Noi and I spent twenty minutes discussing the classroom atmosphere when she expressed her idea about using B-SLIM:

Usually, I am not a patient person. I got angry with my students when they did not do what I tell them to do. Bilash model is a new method which interests me a lot. It makes me more patient than in the past. Preparing materials before class with my students, circulating and helping them during the class makes me see myself better. Bilash Model is like a mirror. It reflects what I teach. I prefer it to my former style (Noi, January 26, 2001).

As a team we also learned that teaching listening skills to weak EFL students was not an easy task for Thai EFL teachers. Nuy encountered difficulty in teaching listening skills to 8/3 students. We realized that in Thailand English learners' listening competence is weak compared to other skills. Since students have had little exposure to spoken English for communicative purposes, listening activities may provide them with the necessary first for communicative language

development (Nunan, 1999). Thus, Thai EFL teachers need to learn how activities can be adapted to the learners' capacities. Finally, Nuy found he could help to stimulate students' participation in activities through the use of video. He asked his students to view the video several times and then assigned them to work in groups and discussed what they had seen and answered questions he formulated about the video. I found that giving visual support for a listening activity was an effective technique that the teachers could use to help their students learn English.

During this cycle the teachers appeared to understand the differences between "getting it" and "using it" activities and knew how to select them according to themes. As Noi noted:

> *Next semester I will continue using Bilash model even though you won't observe me any longer. I plan to prepare materials during summer. I will look for new activities and apply them carefully for my students. Well, as you know a lesson plan is required in schools so I will do it by myself. In the past I did not know how to do it and why I had to do it but I do know it now. Bilash model can help me! I can have my own lesson plan as long as I use Bilash model. It is not difficult at all. Just think of activities, materials, and themes (Noi, January 23, 2001).*

And Nuy noted:

> *Preparing activities and materials are not too difficult. I need to think about the theme, "getting it" activities which include more examples and models and "using it" activities which allow more time to practice (Nuy, January 26, 2000).*

Reflections/Insights

As a graduate student of the second language program at the University of Alberta I was exposed to a number of different models for second language

learning and teaching with heavy emphasis on B-SLIM. In these classes I also learned about theories of second language acquisition. During the research I was full of enthusiasm for what I had learned and I wanted to apply and to adapt these theories to Thai EFL teachers and their classrooms. I learned to spend a lot of time in classrooms observing and talking to teachers about their problems and possible solutions to these problems. In the process I began to see the teachers as people who had their own needs and purposes which I found difficult to describe. I spent my time talking with teachers and students, each sharing our perspectives and working out collectively what seemed to be the best activities that would work with the students, especially the gifted children and the problem children. We spent considerable time talking about how teachers should direct their classes to be more effective teachers. We also talked about the children's interests and the teacher's role in challenging children and how teachers could assist students in selecting and directing their own activities and offering them challenges and new things to do. Finally, we all agreed that B-SLIM helped us to bridge the gap between the traditional approach and the new approach to EFL teaching. B-SLIM was carefully designed to form a continuum from high structure through low structure that would help students to reduce the affective filter. The conclusion for this cycle was that the teachers improved most all of the teaching skills identified, except for the use of L2 in their classrooms. The teachers rarely used English as the predominate language in their classroom because they always taught English in Thai. Even though I encouraged them to use English as

the teaching medium, they continued the practice of using Thai in their classrooms. This was evident by what I wrote in my journals:

> *During "using it" activities teacher circulated and helped them by correcting their sentences. He provided a safe environment for his students to practice – sat and kneeled down next to students, smiled, made eye contact and nodded his head to show he was listening to them. I was very impressed by his classroom management. He was very good at using games as well as using multimedia and materials. Thanks for his effort! However, he needed to improve in terms of using L2 in the classrooms and paying attention to individuals in each group (researcher's journal, February 23, 2001).*

New Questions

The closure of this cycle gave rise to the following new questions:

How can teachers evaluate their teaching?

How can teachers assess student performance based on their teaching?

Cycle Six: Monitoring Three: Evaluation

Meeting Three

During the third meeting the teachers were involved in reflecting, discussing and reporting on their class's performance. During this meeting the teachers had the opportunity to gain a greater awareness and understanding of what went on in their classrooms and to develop strategies they could act on to improve their teaching.

After viewing the videos the researcher and the teachers gave feedback to each other about the teachers' teaching performance and shared each other's "getting it" and "using it" activities. Then we discussed the "evaluation" phase, the last phase of B-SLIM. Our focus was on how to plan appropriate and

effective evaluation for the CLT classroom. The response of teachers for this week was more positive and active than in previous weeks.

Action

Following the meeting the teachers prepared activities and materials which were presented to the researcher for comments. During the next step the teachers implemented B-SLIM in their classrooms to develop formative evaluation to measure student progress.

Observations/Findings

From the observation I made, the review of students' journals, and conversations with some of the students throughout the project I found that the students had high test anxiety especially among strong students. They had a constant fear of failing an examination. Thus, during this cycle, the teachers learned how to assess CLT classroom performance and activities to reduce students' anxiety. I learned that using cooperative learning helped to reduce student competitiveness which could raise their anxiety level of and hinder their progress. Teachers made an attempt to lower students' anxiety level by incorporating group and pair work. I noticed that this technique helped students to develop their communicative competence without creating among them an anxiety - ridden learning atmosphere, one that could result in negative attitudes toward language learning and testing. The teachers also helped students see how the use of cooperation, rather than competition, in learning a language was to their advantage. On this issue Noi wrote:

There are some problems in class, though. Some students don't like to stay in groups, they want to work individually. I have to explain the advantages of working in groups to them. However, there are a few students who aren't interested in activities, so I have to motivate them (Noi, January 25, 2001).

The teachers began to understand the link between testing and teaching and classroom-based evaluation . For example, as Nuy wrote:

This week I tried out a new method of evaluation. Instead of placing emphasis on exams, I talked to my students about how I would evaluate them both through writing exams and observing during "doing activities" in class. My students seemed to be satisfied with the new method of evaluation because using this procedure would reduce stress placed on examinations (Nuy, February 9,2001).

From doing this project I learned that monitoring the action of students and teachers was more complicated than simply collecting data about how individuals performed in a teaching and learning situation. Most times it meant generating data to use as a basis to reflect on and evaluate what had happened, and to reformulate plans for further action. Some of these actions were the actions of the researcher and other actions were those of the student and teacher participants. As an observer of the teachers in their classrooms often I had to answer the question "how can I provide feedback after observing them teach in order to monitor their actions?" I could say that I had success in developing a collaborative relationship with them where we worked as equals and respected each other's opinion. However, because of individual differences I could not use the same strategies with every teacher. I quickly learned that if the observer was open, honest, and blunt, the outcome with some teachers might be hurt feelings that destroy a working relationship. Some of the teachers were quite sensitive

about negative feedback so I had to approach them with caution when I provided them with feedback. Sometimes I restrained myself about providing negative feedback because I was concerned it might hurt the sensitive teacher. Now I am well aware that perceptions of trust and respect need to be developed over time and cannot be rushed – three months is not enough time to firmly establish these attitudes!

Reflections/Insights

The post-observation discussion with the teachers revealed that they were aware of the shortcomings of their approaches to teaching and had the desire to learn and apply newly learned methods. After the feedback session was completed, we asked for responses from those who were observed about the usefulness of this process. One of the teachers expressed a wish that observation and post-observation discussion be conducted throughout the school. I agreed this would be a good idea. Teachers in Thailand are often forced to work in isolation from their colleagues and have a difficult time to share their successes and problems with others. Clearly this can be a professional and productive experience.

During this cycle the teachers began to perceive themselves as action researchers. They knew how to monitor their own classrooms. I learned that the more the teachers perceived a classroom observer as a researcher rather than an evaluator, the greater they developed their abilities to become better teachers. In my role as researcher the teachers tended to perceive me as being non-judgmental. Thus, they were more open with feedback they received from

the researcher, their peers and their students. Openness to students' feedback indicated to me a willingness on the part of the teachers to change and to monitor their classroom performance. The teachers realized that feedback from the students was the most informative type of feedback they could receive.

New Question

The closure of this cycle gave rise to the following new question which deserves further examination:

How can teachers help students to reduce stress brought on from a system which places undue emphasis on examinations?

Cycle Seven: Monitoring Four: Strong Examination System

Meeting Four

After conducting the usual business of watching the videos and giving and receiving feedback, the discussion at our next meeting began to change direction. Instead of discussing teaching routines, the team began to focus on the psychological challenges most Thai students encounter. As mentioned earlier, Thai education places undue emphasis on examinations, the university entrance examination, in particular. Thai people are well aware that a limited number of Thai students will have access to public universities because the number of high school applicants far exceed the number of seats available in these universities across the country. As a consequence, Thai students work extremely hard in order to pass both the school exams and the university entrance examination. The average student will spend 11 hours from 7 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening, Monday through Friday in school. In

addition, some of these students take private lessons at tutorial schools on Saturday and Sunday to prepare for these exams. In terms of the university entrance exam students need to prepare a minimum of four or five years before writing this examination. Almost all Thai students suffer from " academic stress" in their attempt to do well at furthering their educational potential. Students are worried about the grades they will achieve on final exams. Parents and teachers set high expectations for the students and put pressure on them to achieve these expectations.

Because of this academic stress students do not learn happily in Mahasarakham University Laboratory School or any other school in Thailand. There is competition among them to rank at the top of the class, and to be at the top of the school in academic achievement. It was evident from students' journals and conversations I had with them that between six and seven per cent (all stronger students) viewed that doing activities such as games, songs, and role play would not help them pass the university entrance examination. On this issue Mon shared his idea during a conversation we had:

> *In my point of view, this kind of teaching is not extremely suitable for students at upper level high school in Thailand. Because of the education system, students have to study hard and be active to pass the entrance examinations. There are many students studying after school in the evening even though they study a lot during the day. Some of my students told me that if they do not do so, they will not pass the entrance exam. They have to find different techniques to pass entrance exams. You know it becomes a fashion for young teenagers at the moment (Mon, February 12, 2001).*

During the discussion I also suggested the teachers use more cooperative learning to reduce student competitiveness which could lower negative attitudes towards language and testing.

At the end of the meeting it was agreed that this problem was the result of Thailand's socio-economic structure. Because the Thai government is unable to provide students with equal opportunity to have access to a university education and guarantee that they would be employed following graduation. This problem is beyond the realm of this study and is difficult to solve.

Action

During the following meeting the teachers prepared activities and materials which were presented to the researcher for comments. In order to reduce competitiveness the activities the teachers prepared for his cycle emphasized on pair and group work. Since the teachers had achievement of organizing and monitoring pair and group work during cycle four during this cycle I only guided them. Next step, the teachers implemented B-SLIM in their classroom to help their students reduce stress.

Observations/Findings

I observed that higher level students, those in grades 9/1,9/2, and 9/4, enjoyed working in groups. During group work they were encouraged by the teacher to express their opinions and grievances, to speak up and be heard, to make mistakes and to learn from these experiences. In other words, they were advised not just to learn from teachers and textbooks. Several students

mentioned that group work allowed them to help each other and they also had opportunities for participation and for using English in different circumstances. Student journals note:

> *It's easier to work in a small group. I really feel that to be part of a small group to be responsible for its successful and unsuccessful .We did very well in role play.. . lots of emotion! (student's journal)*
>
> *Today was the first time that I really participated in class. We were given specific questions to answer and the group worked much better. I actually enjoyed the experience and participated a lot in the discussion (student's journal).*

Reflections/Insights

From my perspective it is difficult for teachers who themselves have learned English through traditional approaches to suddenly turn their backs on familiar classroom methods in favor of newer unfamiliar ones. Furthermore, professional and personnel overburden conditions provide an easy excuse for teachers to dismiss CLT as impractical or inappropriate. Another problem Thai EFL teachers must face is the dominance of a strong university entrance examination system. It is understandable, then that teachers would be reluctant to abandon their "teaching to the test" approach and that they would want to retain the more familiar grammar-translation and drill-and skill methods with which they were taught and are comfortable with.

However, from doing this project, the teachers became more aware of the nature of their teaching and the basis they used to select techniques, and activities they thought would work with their students.

Chart 1 summarizes the challenges that the students and the teachers faced when applying B-SLIM.

Chart 1

Challenges

Cycle	Students	Teachers
Three: Workshops and Implementation of B-SLIM Week One	Weak Students needed: -more "getting it" activities and model and guidance to help them understand input. -more time for "using it" activities Musical learners needed activities which incorporated songs and rhythm.	-time constraints/over burden condition -distinguishing between "getting it" and "using it" activities -selecting "getting it" and "using it" activities and preparing materials according to themes -making input comprehensible by modeling during the comprehensible input stage and demonstrating during the "getting it" stage -using a variety of interactional activities/low risk high security/fun/motivating and interesting, using authentic

		materials. -organizing and monitoring pair and group work -giving appropriate time for each activity based on students' abilities -using L2 -giving praise and encouragement as well as providing safe environment for the students to practice. -minimize TTT
Four: Monitoring One: Developing Nine Teaching Skills	A few weak students felt uncomfortable participating in classroom activities because they were shy and lacked self-confidence. Strong students who had: -a traditional orientation towards learning were unfamiliar with this model. -test anxiety commented that CLT activities were a waste of time because they only needed	-time constraints/over burden condition -distinguishing between "getting it" and "using it" activities -selecting "getting it" and "using it" activities and preparing materials according to themes -making input comprehensible by modeling during the comprehensible input and demonstrating during the "getting it" stage

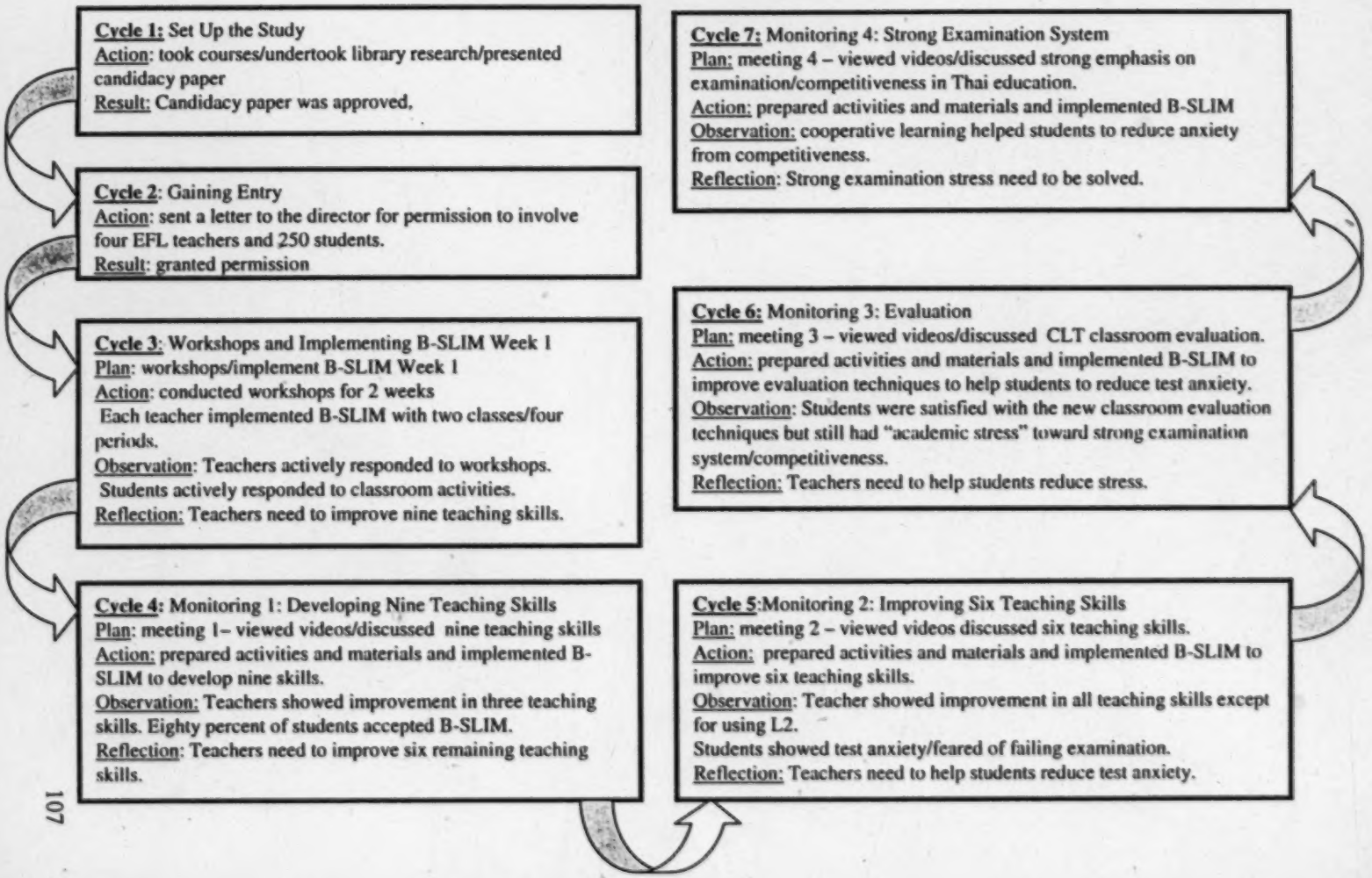
	to learn what was necessary in order to pass English examinations.	-giving appropriate time for each activity based on students' abilities -using L2 -minimizing TTT
Five: Monitoring Two: Improving Six Teaching Skills	A few weak students felt uncomfortable participating in classroom activities because they were shy and lacked self-confidence. Strong students who had: -a traditional orientation towards learning were unfamiliar with this model. -test anxiety commented that CLT activities were a waste of time because they only needed to learn what was necessary in order to pass English examinations.	-time constraints/over burden condition -using L2 -CLT classroom evaluation
Six: Monitoring Three: Evaluation	A few weak students felt uncomfortable participating in classroom activities because	-time constraints/over burden condition

	classroom activities because they were shy and lacked self-confidence. Strong students who had: -a traditional orientation towards learning were unfamiliar with this model. -test anxiety commented that CLT activities were a waste of time because they only needed to learn what was necessary in order to pass English examinations. All student especially strong students stressed from competitiveness and strong examination system.	-using L2 -strong examination system
Seven: Monitoring Four: Strong Examination System	A few weak students felt uncomfortable participating in classroom activities because they were shy and lacked self-confidence. Strong students who had:	-time constraints/over burden condition -using L2 -strong examination system

	-a traditional orientation towards learning were unfamiliar with this model. -test anxiety commented that CLT activities were a waste of time because they only needed to learn what was necessary in order to pass English examinations. All student especially strong students stressed from competitiveness and strong examination system.	

Diagram2

Seven Action Research Cycles


Cycle 1: Set Up the Study
Action: took courses/undertook library research/presented candidacy paper
Result: Candidacy paper was approved.
Cycle 2: Gaining Entry
Action: sent a letter to the director for permission to involve four EFL teachers and 250 students.
Result: granted permission
Cycle 3: Workshops and Implementing B-SLIM Week 1
Plan: workshops/implement B-SLIM Week 1
Action: conducted workshops for 2 weeks
Each teacher implemented B-SLIM with two classes/four periods.
Observation: Teachers actively responded to workshops.
Students actively responded to classroom activities.
Reflection: Teachers need to improve nine teaching skills.
Cycle 4: Monitoring 1: Developing Nine Teaching Skills
Plan: meeting 1– viewed videos/discussed nine teaching skills
Action: prepared activities and materials and implemented B-SLIM to develop nine skills.
Observation: Teachers showed improvement in three teaching skills. Eighty percent of students accepted B-SLIM.
Reflection: Teachers need to improve six remaining teaching skills.
Cycle 5:Monitoring 2: Improving Six Teaching Skills
Plan: meeting 2 – viewed videos discussed six teaching skills.
Action: prepared activities and materials and implemented B-SLIM to improve six teaching skills.
Observation: Teacher showed improvement in all teaching skills except for using L2.
Students showed test anxiety/feared of failing examination.
Reflection: Teachers need to help students reduce test anxiety.
Cycle 6: Monitoring 3: Evaluation
Plan: meeting 3 – viewed videos/discussed CLT classroom evaluation.
Action: prepared activities and materials and implemented B-SLIM to improve evaluation techniques to help students to reduce test anxiety.
Observation: Students were satisfied with the new classroom evaluation techniques but still had "academic stress" toward strong examination system/competitiveness.
Reflection: Teachers need to help students reduce stress.
Cycle 7: Monitoring 4: Strong Examination System
Plan: meeting 4 – viewed videos/discussed strong emphasis on examination/competitiveness in Thai education.
Action: prepared activities and materials and implemented B-SLIM
Observation: cooperative learning helped students to reduce anxiety from competitiveness.
Reflection: Strong examination stress need to be solved.

Chapter Four

Findings from Teachers

In this chapter I will present the factors which seemed to influence adapting CLT, to the Thai context from the teachers' perspective. I will also integrate factors which seemed to have positively influenced teachers' attitudes towards change in classroom practice from my perspective as a participant-observer – facilitator of this action research project. The factors are: applying B-SLIM in the classroom; opportunities for guided practice; sharing knowledge and ideas; learning to critique; overturning doubt.

In order to best present these factors let me begin with a description of the classroom prior to our first action research workshops.

The EFL Classrooms Prior to the Study

All teacher participants were novice teachers with between one and three years of teaching experience. The two males and two females involved in the project are all graduates of Mahasarakham University with a major in the humanities. They have completed course work in linguistics, literature, phonetics, and translation. As has already been mentioned in chapter two, from my perspective prior to the research, they were considered competent in subject knowledge, but they had limited pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). A major shortcoming of these teachers was that they had a minimal developed understanding of the methods used to present the concepts to students to facilitate their learning. One teacher shared her idea during the last meeting:

Before I worked with you I viewed teaching English as not a complicated thing. I presented everything to my students and then asked them to do exercises. Now I understand that learning to teach is really a process of integration. All I see now is a lot of bits and pieces. How does it all come together? It seems like a tremendous challenge (Nong, February 12, 2001).

During my classroom observations and conversations with the teachers I noticed that Mon enjoyed using the grammar translation method. He directed his class by spending one hour presenting the use of the pronoun. For the next hour he handed out exercises directed at what was previously taught and asked students to complete these exercises. At the end of the period he asked students to memorize irregular verbs.

Since the teachers had neither taken pedagogical courses nor received training relevant to their professional activities, textbooks were extremely helpful; they guided the four teachers on what and how to teach. These teachers sometimes added songs, games, and role play to enhance learning activities when they found that their students were getting bored. As they described:

Prior to the project I always followed a regular pattern of textbooks. I asked students to read a text, then answer some questions, then they completed exercises, then I assigned a ton of homework. During the middle and end of the semester they have to memorize everything from the textbooks. Otherwise they would not pass exams...then...(Nuy, December 12, 2000).

Prior to the project I did not know much about teaching methodologies. I generally used textbooks and teaching handbooks to guide me in terms of classroom management and teaching activities. All my teaching was based on whole class work-drill-skill method. I was looking for new methodologies because I observed that my students did not cooperate. They expressed exasperation and boredom. Students did not pay attention in my class (Noi, December 1, 2000).

Applying B-SLIM in the Classroom

During the first two weeks of my working with the teachers I was anxious and apprehensive whether or not I would be able to work with them. I was also not sure whether or not B-SLIM would work well with Thai students. However, after the first meeting (conversation) I was quite sure that the teachers trusted me and were willing to help me with what I saw as a difficult task. As a consequence I felt more comfortable working with them. I was very surprised to learn that with all of the hours we had spent working on B-SLIM the teachers were eager to apply this new methodology. All of them viewed B-SLIM as a tool to support what they were trying to accomplish in classroom practice. It helped them to bridge the gap between the traditional approach and the new approach of CLT. They indicated that B-SLIM was useful in support of what they felt was right for their students. In addition, I observed that they learned so fast – more than expected to orient themselves to the new theory. As the four teachers wrote about B-SLIM:

> *Surprisingly! my students were different from any other day. They laughed, talked, and spoke English. They felt relaxed to study English – the subject they dislike. I realize that teaching grammar can be interesting if I add activities for my students. I should not make them sit all the time I teach. I should let them go around and talk to their friends. If they have problems, I am available to help them (Nuy, January 12, 2001).*

> *Next semester I will continue using Bilash model even though you won't observe me any longer. I plan to prepare materials during summer. I will look for new activities and apply them carefully for my students. Well, as you know a lesson plan is required in schools so I will do it by myself. In the past I did not know how to do it and why I had to do it but I do know it now. Bilash model can help me! I can have my own lesson plan as long as I use Bilash model. It is not difficult at all. Just think of activities, materials, and themes (Noi, January 23, 2001).*

I like the way the researcher does. Not only teachers but also students can feel comfortable of doing such a difficult thing like this. Teachers can simplify the lesson by using activities. In addition, watching videos and discussing what we have done is a good time for busy teachers like us. Thanks for bringing a new idea to us (Nong, January 15, 2001).

In my opinion, Bilash model is a good way for students. The students can enjoy class so well. They feel relaxed and enjoy a variety of activities. It also makes them want to learn more and pay attention in the class. It's very good for students who are poor at English. They can participate in activities and learn by playing games. However, the students who are very good in English do not want to play games. They claim that playing games waste their time. The important thing is that we do not have enough materials. I think Bilash model does not fit senior high students because they have to prepare themselves for university entrance exam (Mon, February 8, 2001).

The followings is an excerpt from a conversation with one of the teachers:

Using Bilash Model helps me create my own texts and select authentic materials at an appropriate level for my students. I also learn a lot about how to create a warm, stimulating atmosphere in which students will feel secure and confident. Before using this model I often threatened and scared my students when they did not pay attention to the classroom activities. Furthermore, using Bilash Model I can choose a wide variety of materials, techniques and strategies in order to respond to students' interests and capacities. I find that my students 8/3 in particular really like to play games (Nuy, January 26, 2001).

Only one of the teachers expressed his idea about using B-SLIM with a large class and he also mentioned the difficulty of implementing this model because of the teachers' inadequate English proficiency. This is illustrated in his journal:

. . . I think many Thai teachers try to use communicative teaching for their students, but it doesn't work. They cannot manage their classes. If so, they, themselves, will get bored because the classes are out of control. Of course, they give up at last. What's more? Some teachers particularly in the country cannot speak English fluently. Therefore, it may be difficult for them to lead the classes or use communicative teaching. I prefer CLT, nevertheless, I still have some problems, Firstly, I found out there are so many students - approximately 40, in a class. Whenever I want to check

whether or not, I cannot test them all. Just some of them volunteer and when I call one by one, it wastes a lot of time. So I just choose people by random. And a few students are not satisfied because they have not got any chance to present what they have learned. If I call one of them often, some think I like him/her. Thus I think it will be much more effective if there are around 20 students in each class (Mon, February 23, 2001).

I realized that the teachers agreed with me and were ready to change. However, a major problem I encountered in conducting the research was that the teachers were very busy in performing their professional responsibilities. Three of them are part time master degree students. Moreover, all of them taught 28 hours a week and they were also responsible for marking numerous student papers, looking after students before and during morning assembly, and supervising them during lunch time. As a consequence, the teachers felt they did not have enough time to prepare their lessons. The following are excerpts taken from the teachers' journals:

. . . To follow this model, surely, I will have problems in preparing materials since I have no time to make good work. I will try my best, anyway (Mon, December 22, 2000).

My students are getting bored with my teaching style. Maybe I have to change to Bilash model but I have my assignments to do for my study. So I am not sure whether or not CLT works (Noi, January 12, 2001).

. . . You know, I have to teach for 26 hours a week and I have about 245 students. That's outrageous, right? Sometimes I get extremely tired and I have no mood to do anything. I do want to rest but I have to work otherwise I won't get pay (Mon, February 12, 2001).

In addition Nong had this to say during the last meeting about time constraints:

This is maybe the last time for us to have a meeting like this. We usually do not have time to talk and meet each other. So every time we have a meeting, we seem to be happy (Nong, February 26,2001).

My journal entry indicated that I encountered difficulty scheduling workshops on a daily basis.

Today I had a problem with time management. All of the participants were busy. I could not follow the workshop schedule I had already set. We could not meet every day after classes so we decided to meet on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday after classes (researcher's journal, December 8, 2000).

Opportunities for Guided Practice

Action research allows teachers to formulate and seek answers to the problems and issues which confront them in their every day teaching. Carr and Kemmis (1985) suggest that educational research is essentially practical in nature. Its aims are to solve problems, bring about change and get things done. This study encouraged and assisted teachers to take a critical and experimental approach to their teaching and classroom practice. As a consequence, they became action researchers who conducted research in their classrooms. Research which was more likely to lead to change rather than conducted by someone removed from the classroom.

In analyzing both the researcher's journal and teacher's journals, I discovered that one of the most important aspects of conducting workshops was my ability to relate principles to practice. The teachers needed to see the innovation of practice – in "live" demonstrations. Given a presentation by the researcher was not enough for the teachers to understand a new approach. An example of such a case was recorded in November 4, 2000 entry of my journal:

After I finished B-SLIM presentation, I provided the opportunity for participants to ask questions for clarification. I found it was not easy to help the participants to understand the model. We spent a lot of time talking about the difference between "getting it" and "using it" activities. However, I noticed that after I demonstrated the model they had a clearer concept of the model. Moreover, when they had opportunities to practice what they had learned in a non-threatening environment (there was no loss of face involved when things went wrong), they had fully understood the new approach (researcher's journal, November 4, 2000).

A teacher journal entry confirmed how teachers felt after they had tried things out for themselves.

After we had the meeting I was confused what my class would be doing until the researcher demonstrated the model. And when I tried out Bilash model two or three times I think I know how to select "getting it" and "using it" activities to fit into themes that would be appropriate for my students (Noi, January 12, 2001).

As a teacher educator, it is part of my responsibility to observe student teachers when they are enrolled in practicums and assigned to different schools for student teaching. I learned that when these students were judged and evaluated on their performance by me, they often had the very human tendency to "shut down" and develop a rigid cloak of defensiveness. This observation technique did little to motivate student teachers to perform better or to enhance their classroom practice. An observation technique I developed for my research project was to coach and help teachers instead of judging and evaluating them – the feedback provided was to be used for developmental purposes, only not assessment. When giving negative feedback, I used descriptive positive terms rather than taking a negative approach. Instead of saying "you do not like to answer difficult student questions, do you? I would say "when students ask you certain types of questions, you look annoyed". As an observer it took one month

before I was accepted by the female teachers and two weeks before I gained the acceptance of the male teachers. I realized that a vital point for giving negative feedback was the issue of timing. If the person whom I had observed appeared to be angry, annoyed, flustered, or anxious, the time was not appropriate for me to present my observations. Thus, I believe that before an observation can be made mutual trust and respect must be established between the teacher and the observer.

A surprise finding was that three of the teachers reported having strong levels of anxiety prior to my classroom visit although I perceived that a high level of trust had been established between the teachers and the observer with the assurance that all data collected were solely for development and learning.

Sharing Knowledge and Ideas

In this study the four EFL teachers indicated that one of the benefits of involving them collaboratively in all phases of the research project was that it helped them to establish a degree of ownership and to identify and overcome the limitations of their previous ways of thinking, acting and reacting. This theme supports findings of Wallace (1991), Nunan (1990), Fanselow (1988), and Gebhard et.al., (1987) who suggest that classroom teachers benefit from an instructional procedure if they are able to work together while generating and exploring alternative sets of instructional procedures.

The facilitation of reflexivity through action research is empowering to teachers, it enables them to explore effectiveness and application of theory in relation to, and in the light of their own practice and their understandings of this

practice (Elliot, 1996). I noticed that the teachers brought a wealth of ideas to each workshop session, especially during the second week when the teachers selected activities and prepared materials according to the levels they taught and presented their work for comments by the researcher before being presented to the students. This was evidenced in my journal entry for December 22, 2000:

> *As I believe that education is about empowerment and what it empowers is people's autonomy. I allowed the teachers opportunities to generate knowledge, as opposed to being passive consumers of it. Even though I had already prepared "getting it" and "using it" activities, I did not impose these activities on them. The participants could initiate their pieces of work. Surprisingly, they worked very well (researcher's journal, December 22,2000).*

This was supported by what was written in the journal of a teacher.

> *The researcher was open-minded to accept our opinions. I felt comfortable to do my work and ask for her advice . . . Preparing activities and materials was not too difficult. I needed time to prepare activities and materials according to the theme (Nuy, December 17,2000).*

The following appeared in another teacher's journal:

> *The atmosphere of the workshop today was very good. I felt free to participate. The researcher gave me a lot of details about Bilash model, accordingly I could understand how to implement Bilash model in my classroom (Nong, January 11, 2001).*

Conversations with the teachers were designed as informal meetings between the researcher and the teachers. During these conversations I observed that males responded more actively than did the females. Male teachers were more eager to participate in conversations than were female teachers. During the conversations, it was evident that male and female teachers asked similar questions; however, male teachers asked more questions than did female teachers. Nevertheless, all the teachers agreed that having conversations with

the researcher and their colleagues helped them to enhance their practice, as illustrated from these excerpts taken from teacher's journals:

> *We did a lot of discussions particularly about our instruction. We watched videos and explained to our team what we did. Well, I suppose we have time together like this monthly. It's good for English teachers sharing opinions about their students. Sometimes we did not know what had happened during the class until we watched the videos (Mon, January 5, 2001).*
>
> *After having a discussion the last time, I felt very comfortable about having meeting. Everybody had a different style to teach the students. We spent most of the time watching and talking about the activities we used in our classes. I think it is good idea to talk and discuss about what we have done (Nong, January 19, 2001).*
>
> *We had a meeting to see how we taught students by watching videos. I felt nervous at the beginning because I have never seen myself while I was teaching. We took turns presenting what we were doing and what materials we were using in class. I found that I made a lot of mistakes from watching the videos and I also learned new techniques from other teachers. I will adapt these activities to my classroom. We felt comfortable to share activities and materials. It is very helpful (Noi, January 5, 2001).*

Learning to Critique

A major difficulty I had as a researcher was to encourage the teachers and their students to keep journals. I still do not know why both student participants and teacher participants did not like to write, although they had the option of writing in English or Thai. In spite of the many suggestions I made about how to write and keep a journal, neither the students nor the teachers wrote journal passages that were long descriptive and detailed. For the teachers I assumed that they were not ready to reflect on their teaching practice and details of their performance. One teacher expressed to me that she really wanted to keep a journal but had no idea how to write statements that would accurately reflect her

practice. It is possible that these teachers were bound by their culture. In Thai society criticism is rarely allowed whether it is self-critique or institutional critique. People are afraid that if criticism is forthcoming it may effect either their social status or their careers.

Since peer observation did not fit my project, the use of video recordings provided me with very useful information and a reasonable facsimile. This helped me to pick up more details, certain things which were relevant and important (e.g., the verbal exchange between members of a group during group work discussion). I used this technology as an observation tool to collect data and convey it to the teachers – we watched these videos during the regular conversation phase. The teachers were so excited and a little frustrated during the first two weeks while they were being videotaped because they had not been previously exposed to videotaping. They also had little knowledge of collaborative teaching. Prior to their involvement in the project once they closed their classroom doors they believed that teaching was their private domain. However, after each observation the researcher and the teachers held a meeting to discuss and reflect upon teaching practice. After the team reviewed the videos of teaching, each teacher provided suggestions, criticism and comments about their recorded teaching performance. The teachers had the opportunity to observe their performance in their classrooms. They realized that video recordings were very helpful and could be used as a means to improve teaching practice. They could see what was going on "behind their backs", their postures and positions became evident to them when they were talking to

students. They also learned to respect each other's ideas. As Noi commented during meeting three:

> *Discussing our teaching and watching videos during the conversation session not only help me articulate my own teaching but also improve staff relationships. There is something different about our department. There is a feeling of "openness" that I never experience before. I am deeply indebted to the researcher who encourage, advise and support me at all my "crisis points" (Noi, February 12, 2001).*

Overturning Doubt

During the first week workshop the team discussed CLT principles, B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI. The teachers responded positively to what was presented and were eager to proceed. However, there was some concern among the teachers who expressed that they felt that what was presented would not work with their students. They also thought that the Thai education system was not ready for such a challenge because of the heavy emphasis on writing university entrance examinations. Comments made in one of the teacher journals supported this observation:

> *Atmosphere of CLT workshops was nice and friendly. The researcher seemed to be talkative, I guess. Well, maybe it was the first time for CLT workshop for me, so I did not know what to say and ask. I have heard so many times about CLT and I think it will be good for those who are interested in speaking. However, I think Thai education does not match it. My students need grammar and reading for their university entrance exams instead of speaking (Mon, December 22, 2000).*

Although all of the teachers appeared to be very open, one of the teachers held a strong belief in support of traditional methods. He viewed language as knowledge – teachers as purveyors of that knowledge and wielders of power. For him learners were seen as containers to be filled with the knowledge held by

teachers. He was unfamiliar with the CLT approach. I spent a considerable amount of time talking with him after observing him and during conversation sessions. He usually asked for my feedback after I had observed his classroom teaching and the climate of his classroom. I enjoyed meeting with him, talking to him because he was open-mined and willing to share his ideas and problems with me. I encouraged him to use the new approach and provided materials and activities for him to use such as games, songs, newspapers, and videotapes. Sometimes he asked me to demonstrate activities as well as pair and group work management. We also discussed both our successes and shortcomings and I assisted him in preparing activities for his students. After the second month of the project we bonded and became friends as we learned from each other that we shared much about our interest in "kids". He indicated that B-SLIM was useful in support of what he felt right for children especially for the first and second year junior high school students – grades 7 and 8. However, he told me that it was not easy for him to change. It took time and energy. For instance, the first time he did group and pair work activities he had no idea where to stand because in previous lessons he usually stood in front of the classroom – the position of a typical teacher in a teacher dominated classroom. During the last month of the project he showed considerable improvement in terms of organizing pair and group work, providing more examples, demonstrating before allowing students to do activities, minimizing teacher talk time, selecting communicative activities based on BCCA and GMI according to the themes his students had selected, and providing a variety of activities to suit student learning styles. After the last class

(February 23, 2001) we talked about the difference between 7/1 and 7/3. The following is an excerpt from that conversation:

> *Researcher: I think your class went well. Your students in both classes were much more mature. They worked faster, responded more quickly and listened quietly during your presentation, but noisy when they were eager to answer your questions.*
>
> *Mon: I was really excited when I was teaching 7/1 because teaching them the same theme I taught to 7/3 was totally different. Though I asked them to do the same work and to answer the same questions, they reacted differently and came up with different answers. Some activities were easy for 7/1 to do but not for 7/3. I think it can be challenge to use the same activity to many different kids.*
>
> *Researcher: That's right. It's always different when you use one activity and one material in several classes. Do you know? Your recognition of the differences in learning among the students and between classes shows a growth on your part as an EFL teacher in terms of making the shift of focus from teaching the content to teaching the students. Good for you!*

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the factors which seemed to influence adapting CLT to the Thai context from the teachers' perspective and my perspective as a participant-observer-facilitator of this action research project. These factors are:

a) Applying B-SLIM in the Classroom

All the teachers agreed that B-SLIM helped them to bridge the gap between a traditional approach of teaching to CLT the new approach. They indicated that B-SLIM was helpful. It helped their students to be engaged learners. It also motivated weak students to participate in classroom activities. Only one of the four teachers mentioned the difficulty of implementing B-SLIM in a large class.

The major problem that all teachers confronted was the lack of time to prepare activities and materials they would need to use with B-SLIM.

b) Opportunities for Guided Practice

In doing this project it became evident that in order to change classroom practice, the teachers needed assistance, motivation, and encouragement. This came from both the one on one encountered with the action researcher and the discussions and sharing of videotapes and activities with their peers.

c) Sharing Knowledge and Ideas

All teachers agreed that one of the benefits that occurred from involving them collaboratively in this project was that it helped them to identify and overcome the limitations of their own ways of thinking, acting and reacting. All teachers indicated that by observing videos of their teaching performance and discussing their practices with the researcher and their colleagues helped them to enhance their teaching practice. More importantly, they described the "collegiality" that emerged from this sharing and how it made all matters function more smoothly and democratically within their department.

d) Learning to Critique

Prior to the involvement in the project the four EFL teachers often worked in isolation from each other. From being involved in this project they had opportunities to observe each other's classroom performance on the videotape, followed by providing suggestions to each other and from the researcher. They learned to give and accept criticism and comments about their performance without fear or anxiety. As Noi commented during meeting three:

Discussing our teaching and watching videos during the conversation session not only help me articulate my own teaching but also improve staff relationships. There is something different about our department. There is a feeling of "openness" that I never experience before. I am deeply indebted to the researcher who encourage, advise and support me at all my "crisis points" (Noi, February 12, 2001).

e) Overturning Doubt

During the first week workshop there was some concern among the teachers who were apprehensive and expressed that they felt that CLT activities would not work with their students. For instance, one teacher held a strong belief in support of traditional methods. He was unfamiliar with the CLT approach. I spent a considerable amount of time working with him until he felt comfortable with this new approach.

Chapter Five

Findings from Students

In this chapter I will focus on the factors which seemed to influence adapting CLT to the Thai context from the students' perspective. I will also integrate factors which seemed to have positively influenced students' attitudes towards change in classroom practice. These factors include: variety of activities; active participation; responding to their ideas; learner-teacher relationship; student input and the role of grammar; kinesthetic learning; and value of Pop-Rock Music. Before I present these factors I will outline how teachers perceived the English competence of their students prior to the study. Data from both teachers' journals and conversations with teachers will be quoted to support and illustrate these perceptions.

English Competence Prior to the Study

The following excerpts, taken from conversations with teachers during the first meeting, illustrate the attitudes some students had toward learning EFL.

> *Grade 9/2 students are quite passive. They seldom answer my questions voluntarily. Most of them simply sit there doing nothing or sometimes talking. Only a few students pay attention in class. The others seem to be unable to bring themselves to participate actively in class (Noi, December 1, 2000).*

> *The low English proficiency students have a negative way of learning English. These students do not pay much attention to what they are studying. In other words, they do not know much about English – one*

student does not even know how to write his last name in English (Mon, December 1, 2000).

Grade 8/1 students are quite good at grammar and speaking. They can create role play. They are eager to answer questions without being afraid of making mistakes. Grade 8/3 students are shy. They do not want to participate in classroom activities (Nuy, December 1, 2000).

Some students are good at grammar, others are not. Some can write English very well, but they cannot speak it. They know grammar but they do not know how to use it through conversation (Nong , December 1, 2000).

The following verbatim quotations are taken from teachers' journals.

There are several levels of my students; excellent, good, poor, and very poor at English. Most of the poor students do not pay attention during class, accordingly, they get nothing and they often fail English exams. Actually, there are two groups of poor students one are the students who are not responsible for their assignment – they never do their homework and another group are the students who are responsible for their assignments and pay attention in class, but cannot learn English well (Nuy, January 5, 2001).

As an English teacher teaching grade seven, I definitely know how they are getting in learning English. I taught the various things about English. And many of them are getting these very well, but some of them are slow in learning English. Very few students have a negative way in learning English – they don't pay much attention to what they are studying. Basically, most students in 7/1 class are good at English compared to others. They tend to understand quickly when I explain something to them. Moreover, they seem to be active and try to find something new about English. In contrast, most of the students in 7/3 class are extremely different. They prefer to do something easier. They do not want to speak English in class. They like to play games or something with action. They usually talk or play while I am explaining in front of classroom. Many students in 7/1 class like to listen to English songs especially "West life". Instructing them for a semester, I assume that my students know how to greet someone and say goodbye. They also learn WH-questions with be and do; short answers with be and do, the present simple tense; Yes/No

questions with be and do. They also learn about articles, nouns, pronouns and demonstrative adjectives. Surely, they do not get out all of those. Many of them are still confused and cannot use them correctly. That is because there are many students in each class, but hopefully they are improving (Mon, January 6, 2001).

Most of my students who are good at English and can use English to communicate with friends in the classroom and sometimes with their native speaker teacher outside the classroom. They enjoy acting and speaking such as drama and role play. In contrast, poor students do not even know how to use verb" to be" (Nong, January 4, 2001).

Since I believe that if students understand grammar, they can use it properly, we cannot speak English without grammar. I teach my students a lot about grammar rules, but they still do not know much about grammar, and cannot use grammar through conversation (Noi, January 4, 2001).

Variety of Activities

Language learning styles are the general approaches that students use to learn a new language or to develop understanding and learning concepts. These are the same styles students employ in learning many other subjects and solving various problems. Associated with learning styles are learning strategies which are specific actions, behaviors, steps or techniques that students use when learning a new language. Teachers need to prepare a variety of activities supported by instructional materials and tasks that will encourage students to develop flexibility in their learning styles and also demonstrate to them the optimal use of different learning strategies and behavior for different tasks (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992).

I noticed that the teachers used communicative activities with students of different English proficiency levels to get their students involved in these activities. These activities included a variety of tasks and used a variety of materials which provided the students with the opportunity to learn from auditory, visual, and kinesthetic experiences (reaching all students' learning styles). The activities also generated interaction and allowed the students to practice their English. Several students, especially those from grades 7/1, 7/3, and 8/3, mentioned during conversations with me that they liked the type of activities, which allowed them to walk and talk. They also liked to become involved in competitive games. Grades 8/1 and 9/1 students liked to role play, while students in grades 7/1, 9/2 and 9/4 liked to listen to the songs, watch videos, and hold group discussions. The following verbatim quotations are taken both from students' journals and teachers' journals.

I found that the lesson today was really interesting. I felt relaxed and enjoyed it very much. It would be better if our teacher offered games and songs (student's journal).

Today's activities are very interesting because they allowed us to walk around the class and ask friends about their New Year holiday (student's journal).

Watching videos gave me more chances to listen to English spoken by native speakers, so I could become familiar with different accents. I felt very satisfied and happy with what we did during this lesson. I hope I can continue this feeling. I wish my teacher would continue doing this after the research (student's journal).

I think this style of learning English is more interesting than the past because it allows conversations with the other students in groups and the chance to watch videos (student's journal).

All of my students like to play games. They seem to be happy to learn English when I allow them to play games (Nuy, December 6, 2000).

Finally, I give them the last "using it" activity – " information gap". I find out they are very interested in this kind of activity. They are very active and enjoy speaking English. Though they cannot speak English well, they try. I realize that they like something challenging or any activities, which they can move and seek for anything that they do not know (Mon, January 12, 2001).

Though I am busy working harder, the results from students are impressive. They enjoyed both discussing in groups and preparing for role play. Some of the students lay down on the floor and discussed with their friends. Some good students helped their friends without complaint. I don't mind circulating and helping them although I am often asked questions almost every second! (Noi, February 2, 2001).

I learned that it was difficult for these novice teachers to include activities that would meet the needs of all their students, for example: the teachers reported that it took them a long time to identify and to select problem solving activities that were related to the themes which students had previously selected.

Active Participation

Almost all students indicated that they enjoyed the approach to learning that was selected and used by their teacher. They preferred activities that allowed them to be active participants which helped them improve their ability to communicate in English. It was evident that the students liked both group work and pair work.

The following statements about the students' participation appeared in the students' journals.

I really want to learn more English in this class than I had done in the past. This English class definitely helps me improve my English. I like English. It's fun (student's journal).

I think I am growing more confident and my English is improving. I enjoy learning English (student's journal).

I enjoy English class with lots of activities that allow active participation. These activities make me love English and want to learn more by myself (student's journal).

Learning English is important, useful, and enjoyable. I like English class because the teacher helps me more often and works with me until I understand it (student's journal).

A few of the weak students expressed negative attitudes towards their English class. One student commented "I do not enjoy learning English. I feel uncomfortable if I speak English in class I am afraid that my friends will laugh at me". Another student stated "I often have difficulty concentrating in English. It's too difficult for me because it has lots of vocabulary and grammar".

In addition, the students that had a traditional orientation toward learning (memorizing the rules of grammar and dialogues, following textbooks) indicated a preference for a class in which the teacher maintains complete control and guides learning. I observed that some students from both 8/1 and 9/1 classes were uncomfortable with the classroom climate that was in effect during the research project (which was less teacher centered). These students reported that

they were unfamiliar with what to do when the teacher let them participate in activities. One student considered these activities to be play and said " I feel like I learn nothing because the teacher just lets us play". Another student commented " I prefer to follow a textbook because I feel like I am learning, not playing, and I like to learn by myself, not with other students. I think group activities in English class are a waste of time". The following comments were taken from students' journals.

> *In English class, the teacher should do most of the talking and students should only answer and complete exercises. Speaking English in class is useful but takes a lot of time. I only need to learn what is necessary to pass exams (student's journal).*
>
> *I prefer to sit and listen, and do not like to be forced to speak in English class (students' journal).*
>
> *I think English class is most useful when the teacher teaches grammar and we practice by doing exercises (student's journal).*
>
> *I sometimes feel awkward speaking English. I think I am less self-conscious about actively participating in class than most of other students (student's journal).*
>
> *I want to sit passively and listen to the teacher. I am not happy when the teacher calls me up to answer questions. I don't want to speak English. I am afraid my friends will laugh at me (student's journal).*
>
> *It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class; I feel uncomfortable if I have to speak in English class. I prefer to sit and listen and don't like being forced to speak English in class because I am afraid that my teacher will think I am not a good student (student's journal).*

Responding to Their Ideas

B-SLIM, BCCA, and GMI helped to lower students' anxiety levels as indicated by the comments they wrote in their journals. All the teachers agreed that each phase of B-SLIM was carefully designed to help their students understand input. For instance, during the planning and preparation phase teachers have to select activities and texts according to the interests of students. Next, during the "intake-getting it " phase teachers have to present "new" ideas, strategies, concepts or knowledge to students by building on the students' previous knowledge associating the new to the old. Teachers also review, break learning into small chunks, and structure selected activities in order to help students "get" input. In addition, during the "intake-using it" phase teachers construct a variety of activities for students to practice in a safe and trusting environment.

The students were provided with a new type of learning environment – one that encouraged them to actively participate. The teachers selected activities according to the theme selected by the students. This helped the students to reduce their anxiety/affective filter. Below are comments both students and a teacher wrote in their journals.

> *I prefer an English class with lots of activities that allow for active participation. I prefer activities and materials that arouse my curiosity even if they are difficult to learn. And whenever I have questions I can ask my teacher any time. She talks with me like I am an adult (student's journal).*

Our teacher is friendly. Before this I hated teachers, I thought they only lived because they wanted to give me a bad mark and destroyed my life (student's journal).

English class today was exciting. The atmosphere was relaxed. I preferred this teaching style more than the past one. I like the classroom where there is more freedom. You know, I can lay down while I am working with my group (student's journal).

There was laughing all over the class. It was a noisy class because they were talking and practicing. Today I had more activities to give them. When I divided them into groups, they liked to sit on the floor doing the task. They were more comfortable working in groups. I tried to make them join the activities though they were poor at English (Noi, December, 27, 2000).

I observed that using cooperative learning helped to reduce student competitiveness which could raise their anxiety level of and hinder their progress. Teachers made an attempt to lower students' anxiety level by incorporating group and pair work. I noticed that this technique helped students to develop their communicative competence without creating among them an anxiety - ridden learning atmosphere, one that could result in negative attitudes towards language learning and testing. The teachers also helped students see how the use of cooperation, rather than competition, in learning a language was to their advantage. On this issue Noi wrote:

There are some problems in class, though. Some students don't like to stay in groups, they want to work individually. I have to explain the advantages of working in groups to them. However, there are a few students who aren't interested in activities, so I have to motivate them (Noi, January 25, 2001).

However, from a review of students' journals and conversations with students I found that 120 strong students reported they had test anxiety, 40 weak students

reported they had communication apprehension as well as fear of negative evaluation anxiety. One student stated during a conversation " I could not sleep last night. I cried, cried and cried. How can I tell my mom that I failed the English test. I forgot to put the verb to be in all of the items. I haven't got any marks!" Another student implied anxiety when this passage appeared in a journal " I think I learn English well, but I don't perform well on test". The following comments are taken from conversation with the students:

English is very fun but we have to write exams and I feel serious immediately. . .

I get anxious whenever I have an English test and I forget everything. I can't write any more.

I feel like everyone else except me passes an exam.

I hate English Exams and I never pass!

I hate English very much because I have to sit for exams for several times to pass it. We only strive for high marks!

I feel somewhat embarrassed in class when I am trying to speak English.

Learner-Teacher Role Relationship

I observed that both students and teachers in this study appeared to be comfortable with the new roles they assumed in EFL classrooms. The teachers and their students worked together in an atmosphere that was more friendly and cooperative, one based on low threat, honesty, open feedback, and respect for

the ideas and the opinions of others. The teachers' roles changed drastically from instructor, director, judge, leader, evaluator and controller to facilitator, helper, guide, consultant, adviser, coordinator, and co-communicator. This change in roles strengthened the teachers' roles, and helped them to become more creative. The status of teachers was no longer based on hierarchical authority, but on the quality and the import of their relationship with students. As Nuy shared his idea during a conversation we had. "I was very surprised students could do everything by themselves. I did nothing but guided them. Now, I realize that when students take on more responsibility, more learning occurs, and both teachers and learners feel more successful". What other teachers wrote in their journals gave support to these observations made by Nuy:

> *I learn that being a facilitator is not easy. I have to prepare a lot of activities so that students can get what I want them to learn. During the class I notice that they discuss a lot in "using it" activities. Some students try to give their reasons to persuade their friends. The more they discuss, the more they learn. There might be noisy in class though I don't mind. However, I have to walk around to help them and observe their improvement. Surprisingly, students like to work on their own if teacher prepare the task for them. The work they do comes from their understanding; however, I have to prepare the task that suit them, not too easy, not too hard (Noi, February, 3, 2001).*

> *I think learner centered approach is good for both teachers and students. My students enjoy working with a variety of activities, which make them want to participate in class. This approach allows them to have opportunities to engage and get involved in all activities(Nong, December 24, 2000).*

> *Now, I learned that students like to volunteer and present what they have learned. They don't want to sit on the chair and listen to what their teacher is explaining, talking then giving them exercises. It seems so boring for*

young children and finally they fall asleep. Well, I recalled when I was in high school, I was extremely sleepy when listening to a teacher speaking in front of the class. Say, I used to be bored with such a kind of teaching like that (Mon, February 3, 2001).

From what I observed the students seemed to be satisfied with their new roles as active learners. These students learned that they had control over their learning and tried to complete classroom activities by themselves. This was most important because it helped them become aware of the learning strategies they would have to use. Some of the students wrote these statements in their journals in support of this observation.

Teachers allowed us to do activities by ourselves. It was quite difficult but it was interesting. Our group did very well today (student's journal).

Teacher walked around and helped us. In the past she just corrected our errors and criticized our work (student's journal).

I feel secure and confident because my teacher creates a very warm, stimulating atmosphere. I feel very much at home with both teacher and friends (student's journal).

In the past my teacher only sent out the papers to us, to only do the exercises without teaching anything. They followed the textbook and just read out again and again and gave me a bad grade. This approach is obviously different. We don't do much exercise with our English but we have to concern how we can use English effectively. We work in groups and learn from each other. I really like it because it allows me to work independently (student's journal).

This style of learning help me to find my own way of learning English not just to follow teacher and textbooks (student's journal).

In the past I did not feel comfortable to interact with friends because we were afraid that we would receive punishment for making mistakes. Now I feel comfortable to speak English in class. Our teacher is very helpful. She is very different from the past (student's journal).

Oh! our teacher is so kind and friendly. I never see such a wonderful teacher in my life! (student's journal)

Student Input and the Role of Grammar

Since we believed that learners have the right to make choices with regard to their learning, we allowed students to select the themes they would learn. It was interesting to learn that almost all students selected themes that centered around grammar. One student explained during our conversation why she selected grammar as a theme:

Grammar is the most difficult compared to other skills. I could not understand it even though teacher taught me the same content over and over again. You know, I've learned the present perfect since I was in grade 7, now I am in grade 9 and I am still confused and cannot use this tense correctly. When the teacher uses games and video we are allowed to help each other; this makes it easier for me to understand grammar.

The following statements are taken from students' journals.

Grammar is very important. I have to prepare for the university entrance exam. Using a variety of activities help me understand better than the past (student's journal).

Grammar was boring whenever teacher taught grammar. I was sleepy so grammar to me in the past was like a sleeping pill. Now, the teacher uses games to teach grammar, so I am not sleepy any more. I love grammar (student's journal).

We have time to use grammar to communicate with friends. I think it is good idea. In the past I did not know how to use grammar for conversation. Now, I can talk to my Fa-Rang teacher (student's journal).

Statements in the teachers' journals included the following.

Teaching the past simple tense isn't easy at all. Firstly, I had to create activities which interest students and fit into the themes. I had to select activities from textbooks to fit "getting it" and "using it". Anyway I have to do this because it helps my students to understand grammar (Mon, December, 2000).

The present perfect tense is one of the difficult tenses for students. They usually get confused between the past simple tense and the present perfect tense so I need to prepare a lot of "getting it' activities to help them to "get it" and prepare two or three "using it" activities for them to practice (Noi, January 14, 2001).

Last term I taught grammar a lot, but it didn't work. Students were not happy; they did not like grammar. We sometimes had disagreements, because I made them study too much. I rarely use songs, games, and any other activities in class although my students wanted me to do so. I gave an excuse that we did not have much time to waste, so we had to study, study, and study. Now, I realize that I should make them happy although they learn tough lessons like grammar. I feel pleased to learn Bilash's Model, although I don't like to be videotaped (Nong, December 12, 2001).

Kinesthetic Learning

I observed that most of the students liked kinesthetic activities such as games, acting, mimes, and role play. They enjoyed being involved in short activities which allowed them to move around the classroom talking and acting. I also noticed that these students were very happy when their teacher asked them to clear up the room to make an area for doing activities. For these activities they

either liked to sit on the floor or walk around doing interactive activities. The following are comments from teachers' and students' journals to support the observation I made:

> *I used memory games to review the use of gerund (Verb+ing+object). To do this I asked my students to divide into two groups boys and girls. They participated so well. What surprised me was 8/3 students were eager to participate. They enjoy playing games (Nuy, January 11, 2001).*

> *At the end of the class I made them play game which liked them very much although it was a grammar game. Actually, it was about correcting mistakes, but they could get grammar more easily. It was a good class, wasn't it? (Noi, 12 January, 2001).*

> *You know, they seemed very slow at the beginning, but when they got to a play game, they seemed very active and wanted to do. Today a few of them asked me more questions. Maybe they did not understand how to do at first; they did not pay much attention especially the ones who were at the back of the class. When I said "GO" they start immediately. I think that because they were curious to know about friends' secret or something special. Finally, I discover that they enjoy this kind of activity so much! (Mon, February, 5, 2001).*

> *Today I enjoyed walking around talking with my friends about what we did during the weekend. We spoke English a lot. My teacher was very kind to us. She did not criticize us anymore when we made a mistake (student's journal).*

> *In the past our English class was very boring because we had to sit two hours listening to the teacher and then doing exercises. Now, we have opportunities to play games. It's fun. I like English class (student's journal).*

> *A great class today! The activities made a lot of people who normally silent get up and participate. . . We enjoyed walking and talking even though our English was not good, we didn't care (student's journal).*

You know, we spent ten minutes before class preparing the room. We needed more space to role play and we wanted to sit on the floor so we had to move desks and chairs away (student's journal).

Value of Pop-Rock Music

I remember that when I was a high school basketball coach, after working with the players for a year or two, I learned the player's strengths, weaknesses and where their skills could be improved. My familiarity with the players led our team to a provincial championship. Besides, knowing the players both on and off the court, I also knew their families, their friends, and the difficulties they were having.

Then I think of the students for whom I had to prepare activities and materials. As I previously mentioned in my project, during the second week of the workshops I had to model the lesson in the four EFL classrooms. The first day that I had to implement B-SLIM was with 9/2 and 9/4 classes. Since I had never taught these classes before, I suddenly perceived how little I knew about the students. I was concerned about how I could help them learn without knowing their background. I learned that understanding students' general likes and interests, English learning experience, and attitudes towards learning helped teachers to make input comprehensible. Krashen and Terrell (1983) refers to this regime as i+1 and Vygotsky (1978) calls it the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Whatever name it is given, once I am better aware of approximately

where "that point" is for each student, I can try to use activities and materials that will be effective and attempt to move the students' learning forward.

What I knew before the class was that these students were not strong in English. I thought I needed to know more about the students to prepare activities and materials which I thought were relevant and closely related to the students' background. In the classroom, after greeting the students, I began to present "new knowledge" – comprehensible input phase. Then I asked the students to do "getting it" activities. For the first "getting it" activity I asked the students to work in groups and distributed a large sheet of blank paper to each group. Next, each group was asked to choose a general topic and write down whatever they associated with the chosen topic on the sheet. Then the students circled words, terms, and sentences they had written which they thought were relevant to the topic. Next, each student in the group took turn writing a sentence they made or chose on the blank sheet of was later posted on the wall.

I was very surprised that each group completed this activity faster than I expected. While circulating among the groups to help them I noticed that the students spent a little time thinking about words, terms, and sentences. Moreover, the words, terms, and sentences they wrote down included either a word or phrase such as "oops! I did it again", "your heart got lost", "shape of my heart", "Ain't nothn'", "oh... crazy, baby, bye, bye", and "stop, stop right now", which did not exist in their textbooks. I asked them where they learned all of

these words. They told me that all words were from pop-rock songs that they had heard on the radio, tape recorder or T.V.

On that day during lunch I had a chance to converse with some of the 9/2 and 9/4 students. The following is an excerpt from that conversation:

Researcher: You guys like pop-rock music?

A: Oh yes, I love "Back Street Boys" . . . their latest album " The Call", Wow!!!

B: How about NSYNC Band, bye, bye, bye. . . oh, oh, oh..hm....hm.. . I am doing this tonight. . .hm...hmm...Hey, baby, come on.

C: I love you endlessly, hm..hmm....My favorite band is Britney Spear. Do you know this song? "Opps! I did it again!

D: Yes, Yes, I don't understand its lyric but I like the music, loud and fast which make me feel active.

E: I've got a lot of Spice Girls' CD's. What I learn most from these songs is vocabulary and expression.

F: I like MTV channel because it helps me improve my listening. I also listen to the song. I learn English from songs. . . I really want my teacher to use songs in our class.

A: Me too, I listen to the song and sing along aloud in the bathroom, trying to understand, but I can't. Anyway, fun!

I was very quiet during this conversation because I had nothing to share with them. Normally, when I have a conversation with students, the topic centres around sports such as NBA super stars or European and South American soccer. However, from this conversation I received an idea on how to design "using it" activities for the next class. I asked the students to prepare a paragraph about their favorite songs or singers and the lyrics and bring what they wrote to the class. The students worked in groups discussing their favorite pop-rock songs and singers. I found that pop-rock songs served very well as a starting

point for class discussion. I also found that this kind of music appealed to the students because of its forms, content, aspirations, and sound. This provided the students opportunities to participate in the classroom by speaking on the topic. Now, I realize the importance of the concept of "teacher as learner" and I believe it is time for me to learn more about pop-rock music. I have now become more conversant with the students because this music is part of their culture.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the factors which seemed to influence adapting CLT to the Thai context from students' perspective. These factors include:

a) Variety of Activities

The teachers used CLT activities with students of different English proficiency levels to get these students involved in activities which included a variety of materials and tasks. They provided the students with opportunities to learn from auditory, visual, and kinesthetic experiences which reached learning styles of all students. These activities also generated considerable student interaction and allowed the students to practice their English.

b) Active Participation

Almost all students indicated that they enjoyed classroom activities that were selected by their teacher. The students preferred activities that allowed them to be active participants which helped them improve their abilities to

communicate in English. However, a few weak students felt uncomfortable participating in classroom activities because of fear of embarrassment. These students were shy and lacked self-confidence. In addition, the students that had a traditional orientation towards learning were uncomfortable with the new classroom climate which was less teacher centered that was in effect during the research project.

c) Responding to their Ideas

B-SLIM was carefully designed to help students understand input and respond to their ideas. For instance, during the planning and preparation phase the teachers had to select activities, texts, and materials according to the interests of the students. To do this the teachers allowed the students to select themes for each observation week, this helped the students to reduce their anxiety and affective filter.

d) Learner-Teacher Role Relationship

Both the students and the teachers appeared to be satisfied with the new roles that they assumed in EFL classrooms. The students and the teachers worked together in an atmosphere that was more friendly and co-operative – one based on low threat, honesty, open feedback, and respect for the ideas and the opinions of others.

e) Student Input and the Role of Grammar

Almost all students selected themes for their input that centered around grammar. The students indicated that B-SLIM helped them understand grammar, which they viewed as being very difficult and was not an interesting input to learn.

f) Kinesthetic Learning

Most of the students, especially the weak students, liked kinesthetic activities such as games, acting, mimes, and role play. They enjoyed being involved in short activities which allowed them to move around the classroom talking and acting.

g) Value of Pop-Rock Music

The students, especially from 7/1, 9/2 and 9/4, liked Pop-Rock music. They could "get" the input very well when this type of music was incorporated into the classroom.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

This study aims to explore issues which need to be considered when adapting CLT to the Thai context. More specifically, it aims to identify factors which influenced changes in teachers' and students' attitudes towards change in classroom practice. The study included four EFL teachers and 250 junior high school students enrolled in the laboratory school attached to Mahasarakham University, Thailand. This chapter summarizes factors which influenced changes in teacher' attitudes and students' attitudes. It also examines the role of PCK in teacher education in Thailand, offers suggestions for the future and gives a closing statement.

Factors Which Influence Changes in Teachers' Attitudes

Five factors were found to influence changes in teacher's attitudes in this study follow:

a) Applying B-SLIM in the Classroom

All the teachers agreed that B-SLIM helped them to bridge the gap between a traditional approach of teaching to the new approach of CLT. They indicated that B-SLIM was helpful. It helped their students to be engaged learners. It also motivated weak students to participate in classroom activities. Only one of the four teachers mentioned the difficulty of implementing B-SLIM in a large class.

The major problem that all teachers confronted was the lack of time to prepare activities and materials they would need to use with B-SLIM.

b) Opportunities for Guided Practice

In doing this project it became evident that in order to change classroom practice, the teachers needed skilled assistance, motivation, and encouragement. This came from both the one on one encountered with the action researcher and the discussions and sharing of videotapes and activities with their peers.

c) Sharing Knowledge and Ideas

All teachers agreed that one of the benefits that occurred from involving them collaboratively in this project was that it helped them to identify and overcome the limitations of their own ways of thinking, acting and reacting. All teachers indicated that by observing videos of their teaching performance and discussing their practices with the researcher and their colleagues helped them to enhance their teaching practice. More importantly, they described the "collegiality" that emerged from this sharing and how it made all matters function more smoothly and democratically within their department.

d) Learning to Critique

Prior to their involvement in the project the four EFL teachers often worked in isolation from each other. From being involved in this project they had opportunities to observe each other's classroom performance on the videotape, followed by providing suggestions to each other as well as gaining feedback

from the researcher. They learned to give and accept criticism and comments about their performance without fear or anxiety. As Noi commented during meeting three:

> *Discussing our teaching and watching videos during the conversation session not only helped me articulate my own teaching but also improve staff relationships. There is something different about our department. There is a feeling of "openness" that I never experience before. I am deeply indebted to the researcher who encourage, advise and support me at all my "crisis points" (Noi, February 12, 2001).*

e) Overturning Doubt

During the first week workshop there was some concern among the teachers who were apprehensive and expressed that they felt that CLT activities would not work with their students. For instance, one teacher held a strong belief in support of traditional methods. He was unfamiliar with the CLT approach. I spent a considerable amount of time working with him until he felt comfortable with this new approach.

Factors Which Influence Changes in Students' Attitudes

The nine factors were found to influence changes in students' attitudes in this study follow:

a) Variety of Activities

The teachers used CLT activities with students of different levels of English proficiency to get these students involved in activities which included a variety of materials and tasks. They provided the students with opportunities to learn from auditory, visual, and kinesthetic experiences which reached learning

styles of all students. These activities also generated considerable student interaction and allowed the students to practice their English.

b) Active Participation

Almost all students indicated that they enjoyed classroom activities that were selected by their teacher. The students preferred activities that allowed them to be "active" participants which helped them improve their abilities to communicate in English. However, a few weak students felt uncomfortable participating in classroom activities because of fear of embarrassment. These students were shy and lacked self-confidence. In addition, the students that had a traditional orientation towards learning were uncomfortable with the new and less teacher-centered classroom climate that was in effect during the research project.

c) Responding to their Ideas

B-SLIM was carefully designed to help students understand input and respond to their ideas. For instance, during the planning and preparation phase the teachers had to select activities, texts, and materials according to the interests of the students. To do this the teachers allowed the students to select themes for each observation week. This helped the students to reduce their anxiety and affective filter.

d) Learner-Teacher Role Relationship

Both the students and the teachers appeared to be satisfied with the new roles that they assumed in EFL classrooms. The students and the teachers

worked together in an atmosphere that was more friendly and co-operative – one based on low threat, honesty, open feedback, and respect for the ideas and the opinions of others.

e) Student Input and the Role of Grammar

Almost all students selected themes for their input that centered around grammar. The students indicated that B-SLIM helped them understand grammar, which they viewed as being very difficult and was not an interesting input to learn.

f) Kinesthetic Learning

Most of the students, especially the weak students, liked kinesthetic activities such as games, acting, mimes, and role play. They enjoyed being involved in short activities which allowed them to move around the classroom talking and acting.

g) Value of Pop-Rock Music

The students, especially from 7/1, 9/2 and 9/4, liked Pop-Rock music. They could "get" the input very well when this type of music was incorporated into the classroom.

h) B-SLIM

From the data in students' journals and conversations I had with some students I would approximate that 80 per cent of the students liked B-SLIM because this model: (a) helped them understand difficult input such as grammar

and listening skills; (b) provided a variety of activities which motivated them to be interested in learning the lesson; (c) provided a friendly learning atmosphere which reduced their level of anxiety. The 20 per cent that did not like this model had the following concerns:

a) A few weak students felt uncomfortable participating in classroom activities because they were shy and lacked self- confidence.

b) The strong students that had a traditional orientation towards learning were unfamiliar with this model.

c) The strong students who had test anxiety commented that CLT activities were a waste of time because they only needed to learn what was necessary in order to pass English examinations.

i) Test Anxiety

From a review of students' journals and conversations with students I found that 120 strong students and 40 weak students reported they had test anxiety. The fear of failing examinations needed to be addressed.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

Doing this project I learned early that pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) was important in the teaching and learning process and teachers who were on the "career entry phase" of their professional life cycle appeared to lack this type of knowledge. Huberman (1993) notes that this phase of a teacher's life in the classroom can be described as a period of survival and discovery. The "survival" aspect has to do with "reality shock" with the discrepancy between

university educational ideas and classroom life, the fragmentation of their work, the difficulty of combining university learning and the reality of classroom management. Schulman (1986) distinguishes between two relevant knowledge domains: subject matter knowledge, which includes key facts, concepts, principles, and explanatory frameworks of a discipline; and pedagogical content knowledge, which consists of an understanding of how to present specific topics in ways appropriate to the students. Schmidt and Gary Knowles (1995) believe that "failure" of beginning teachers may be associated with difficulty in planning and implementing instruction and classroom management.

The four EFL teachers in my study were at the career entry phase of their professional careers. Furthermore, they were being asked to shift paradigms of teaching – from the traditional "sage on the stage" to the modern western notion of teacher as guided facilitators. They needed assistance in making these transitions. In these new roles, they asked to learn how to make their English content knowledge accessible to the students in their classrooms. In other words, they lacked PCK. Many problems originated from the fact that they had limited PCK: they lacked an overview of the complexity of classroom teaching; they had problems motivating their students to become actively involved in the learning process; and they were unable to adapt their teaching to individual student differences. However, the results of the study suggest that the growth of teachers' PCK appeared to be influenced by the amount of content knowledge they possessed. The strong content knowledge of the four EFL teachers had

helped them to develop their PCK effectively. These teachers learned to quickly orient themselves to the new approach to teach EFL.

Just because one knows English doesn't mean one can teach English. Knowing content is not enough. The flip side of course, is that not knowing the content is also unacceptable. Students need guidance to learn certain concepts and that guidance has to come from teachers who understand these concepts. Teachers have to use an instructional approach or model that will help students to learn English. Today most second language teacher education programs in Thailand provide students with subject matter to be learned, general teaching methods, psychology, sociology, and philosophy. At universities in Thailand there has been less emphasis on getting student teachers to think about the subject matter they will teach in terms of PCK. Student teachers need to be aware of the process they have to undertake to make their content knowledge available to students. The implication for second language teacher education is that the focus should be on PCK.

Future Directions

Quality of Instruction in EFL

English language teachers in Thailand often lack specific education and training in applied linguistics and EFL teaching. Currently, there is very little detailed, reliable research evidence which reports how English is actually taught/learned at schools and universities in Thailand, and there is very little evidence that standards are improving significantly (Chandee, 2000). Thus, more research in these areas is required.

Professional Development

In addition, pre-service and in-service programs need to be implemented in order to help beginning teachers to (a) develop their confidence as teachers, (b) acquire a positive attitude towards the teaching profession, (c) learn to care for their students and appreciate their individual strengths and weaknesses, (d) become able to realize their own potential as teachers, and (e) improve their teaching. In-service and pre-service programs should help to identify appropriate learning tasks and activities, acquire language teaching abilities, and develop related conceptual understandings, knowledge, and beliefs. In short, more opportunities for teachers to attend professional development sessions would encourage them to do further study in their special interest and go far in helping them to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

All of the strategies used in this research study could help beginning teachers overcome instructional problems. They include workshops, videotapes, observations, and reflective teaching. To promote reflective teaching written media such as dialogue journals and teaching diaries are useful in providing teachers with opportunities to explore local concerns, sometimes under the guidance of a more experienced teacher-responder. The need for teachers to become invested in their own decision making abilities is also reflected in the emergence of approaches to L2 teachers education that emphasize the importance of peer, in contrast to supervisory, collaborations. Nunan (1991) notes that teachers need to discover and develop their own philosophy of teaching, and create their own methodological practice based upon close

examination of their own and other teachers' authentic classroom experience. Teachers must have opportunities to exchange ideas, share insights, and debate themes with their peers in support of each other. This could be done in various ways. For instance, two or more classroom teachers might collaborate in order to (a) produce separate video-recordings of their language lessons, (b) set aside time to view the recording together, and (c) provide opportunities for the videotaped teacher to talk about events being revealed via the recordings as it is being presented. Most importantly, Thai teachers need time – time to plan, time to research, time to collaborate and time to reflect.

Universities and teacher educators need to take major roles in helping teachers transform content knowledge into PCK. Typically, university courses in Thailand do not teach teachers in ways they will be asked to teach in schools. For instance, it is difficult for EFL teachers to employ a CLT approach if these teachers have not learned or experienced this approach at university. Because the four EFL teachers in this project learned English by mastering a body of knowledge, grammar rules, literature, drama, and phonetics, they tended to see that English should also be taught in the same way. Thus, they provide instruction so that students "learn language facts and knowledge" rather than "experience" language skills.

Since these teachers lacked preparation in teaching methodology, content knowledge was central to their teaching. They had a tendency to draw directly on the content knowledge as they learned it at university. They employed activities their university professors used in university classes. Little did they realize that as

either an elementary or a secondary school teacher, along with knowing subject matter knowledge they would have to include PCK. PCK comprises knowing several presentations for each concept with a number of powerful analogies, examples, mnemonics, and memory aids as well as knowing which ones are likely to be difficult for students and what conceptions, preconceptions students might typically bring with them. Learners are expected to come to an inductive understanding of grammar rules through the process of analogy. In a teaching methodology that reflects what we currently know about second language acquisition, grammar and vocabulary must be taught in context and with purpose (i.e. communicatively). Grammatical patterns needed to be matched to particular communicative meanings so that learners can see the connection between form and function. In other words they learn how to choose the right pattern to express the ideas and feelings that they want to express.

To better understand the specifics of PCK, university professors who prepare EFL teachers need to follow recent graduates into their schools in order to continue with supervision and offer support to these beginning teachers during their initial struggles. Universities and schools must collaborate as equal partners to reduce the sole reliance on the traditional approach of teaching, and in recognizing the connections between theory and practice. Teacher educators must play a pivotal role in encouraging student teachers to become interested in on going professional development, including attending conferences, workshops, and other formal or informal gatherings of language teachers. Teacher educators must provide student teachers with opportunities to explore personal attitudes,

values, and conceptions of teaching through (a) experiential activities and tasks, (b) teaching and micro teaching activities, and (c) opportunities and time for reflection. Furthermore, university course work should provide prospective teachers with opportunities to strengthen PCK, and relate various models and applications. In order to construct teachers' PCK teaching method courses and student teaching experiences should be mandatory for all university students who want to become teachers.

Patience and Policy

Finally, Thailand must acknowledge that the process of change is likely to be a long and gradual one and that it must involve the acknowledgement of the need for true professionalism in language teaching. Thus, there is a need for a comprehensive policy on language teacher education – a policy that offers opportunities to everyone involved. Collaborations between the Ministry of Education, private sectors, teacher training and education institutions should be strengthened and maintained.

B-SLIM

Using B-SLIM can be of particular assistance to beginning EFL teachers. It can help these beginning teachers to focus on learning how to teach and gain confidence from the learning experiences obtained. All teacher participants agreed that this model helped them to develop their PCK. They were aware of how they, as teachers, could facilitate the learning of their specific subject EFL to a specific age group within a specific instructional structure or setting. They

also learned how to help students understand, learn, and remember challenging concepts. However, B-SLIM is not the answer to all EFL classroom problems and difficulties, neither is it the only effective approach to use. Although it can provide much needed motivation, variation, and challenge to everyday classroom routine. It can also be time-consuming and sometimes difficult to operationalize. It still remains to be seen if the teachers in my study can use B-SLIM, without continuous assistance, motivation or encouragement. Moreover, the Thai national university entrance examination system is a major challenge in the application of B-SLIM. Two teachers reported that of the amount of time consumed with B-SLIM took away time senior high school students would need to prepare for their university entrance examination. However, these teachers agreed that B-SLIM was helpful for junior high school students especially, in grades 7 and 8 when exams were not an issue.

Teachers' Beliefs

One major factor that influences change is teacher beliefs in the success or failure of innovation (Anderson & Richardson, 1991). This study revealed the richness of the ideas that teachers brought to the project. This was manifest not only in the differences in the ideas they brought with them, but in what they then acquired throughout the duration of the project. In addition, the results suggest that the degree of teachers' change depended on the ways their thinking became modified about learning and teaching. These teachers would be more inclined to continue using B-SLIM if they accepted the belief that a student-

centered approach, cooperative learning, and constructivism were a valid approach to learning and teaching.

Two out of the four teachers reported that they will continue using B-SLIM because it motivated their students to become actively involved in the learning process. However, all teachers reported the successful use of B-SLIM, especially when they taught the difficult input. B-SLIM has made it easier for students to understand.

Closing Remarks

In reviewing the autobiography that ushers you into this thesis I see a number of "old" issues have finally been resolved. My longing for active participation in my own learning and in that of my students finally seems possible. Through my action research project I have uncovered factors which can influence both teachers and students in becoming active learners. My own improvement in English, the result of an "immersion" at the University of Alberta, has brought about increased confidence, an ability to use more English in the EFL classroom, and an understanding of the roles of translation, interlanguage and cultural transition in the preparation of teachers of EFL. I have also come to see how the examination system is deeply entrenched into Thai society, and how challenging it, requires a long-term political commitment. From the progress I saw in Noi, Nuy, Nong, and Mon as teachers and in their students I am deeply inspired about the potential of action research to empower Thai teachers with

tools such as B-SLIM, BCCA and GMI. I am hopeful about improving the teaching and learning of EFL in Thailand.

From my work with teachers and students in one school in Thailand, many new research questions arisen:

- As students become accustomed to a more learner-centered approach to English classes, will they wish that teachers of other subjects also adapt a more learner-centered approach?
- How might we help teachers to improve their level of English proficiency as a way to help them gain confidence in using more English in their classrooms?
- How might a CLT approach actually help students prepare for examinations? How can students become convinced that a CLT approach can benefit them?
- How might this research project be expanded so that more teachers can benefit from the experience of working collegially and with guidance?
- Did the teachers in this project continue to follow B-SLIM after the research left? If so, what were the results? For how long? What challenges did they face if not, why not?

- How might undergraduate students benefit from B-SLIM, BCCA and GMI? How might these student teachers then influence their cooperating teachers?
- How could this study be replicated in a public school in Thailand, where teachers often have less training and students represent a different social class?

Clearly these questions underline the significance of "contextualizing" a research project. What happened at the laboratory school, and a typical school in Thailand, may not happen in other schools in rural areas or in other neighborhoods.

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Appendix A

Project Schedule

Time	Activities
December 1 , 2000	Informal meeting
Cycle 3 December 4-8, 2000	observe classrooms prior to the implementation of B-SLIM
December 9 -22,2000	workshops
December 25-30, 2000	implement B-SLIM (observation week 1)
Cycle 4 January 2-5, 2001	conversation (meeting 1)/preparing activities and materials
January 8-12, 2001	implement B-SLIM (observation week 2)
Cycle 5 January 15-19, 2001	conversation (meeting 2)/preparing activities and materials
January 22-26, 2001	implement B-SLIM (observation week 3)
Cycle 6 January 29-31, 2001 February 1-3, 20001	conversation (meeting 3)/preparing activities and materials
February 5-9, 2001	implement B-SLIM (observation week 4)
Cycle 7 February 12-16,2001	conversation (meeting 4)/preparing activities and materials
February 19-23, 2001	implement B-SLIM (observation week 5)
February 28, 2001	Informal meeting

Appendix B

Workshop Schedule

December 9-22, 2000

Day/Time	Topics	Activities
December 12, 2000 5 P.M.-9 P.M.	action research - characteristics of action research - classroom action research communicative competence CLT principles	presentation discussion brainstorming
December 14, 2000 5 P.M.-9 P.M.	B-SLIM - planning and preparation - comprehensible input	presentation discussion brainstorming
December 15, 2000 5 P.M.-9 P.M.	B-SLIM - intake "getting it" activities - intake "using it" activities	presentation discussion brainstorming
December 19, 2000 5 P.M.-9 P.M.	designing CLT activities - BCCA - Gardner's multiple intelligences	presentation discussion brainstorming
December 21-22, 2000 5 P.M-9 P.M.	preparing activities and materials for observation week one	The four EFL teachers worked individually to prepare activities and materials appropriate for the grade levels and presented to the researcher for comments.
December 15-22, 2000		The researcher modeled B-SLIM in the four EFL teachers' classrooms.

Appendix C

Schedule for Observation Week

Time Day	08.20	09.10	10.00	10.50	12.00	13.00	13.50	14.40	15.30
Mon					B	Nong	9/2		
Tues			Noi	9/2	R				
Wed	Mon	7/1	Noi	9/4	A			Nuy	8/3
Thurs	Mon	7/3	Nong	9/1	K		Nuy	8/1	
Fri					E				

Appendix D

Observation Categories

Observations were designated into one of the following sections:

1. learners
2. teacher language
3. learning environment
4. teaching skills and strategies
5. classroom management

Learners

Learner Motivation

The objective of the observation was to consider students' behavior/role and the degree to which they cooperate with teacher and peers. (adapted from Wajnryb, 1992)

Observation scheme

Class Weak/Strong students	Motivation	Behavior

Learning Styles

People learn in different ways, at different rates with different styles. Thus, the objective of the observation was to observe learners' learning styles.

Observation scheme

Class Weak/Strong Students	Learning Styles

Learners Response to Classroom Activities

The objective of the observation was to find out students' response to classroom activities. (adapted from Nunan & Lamb, 1996)

Observation Scheme

Behavior	1	2	3	4	5
1. confusion					
2. laughter					
3. shy					
4. resourceful					
5. self-reliant					
6. use L1					
7. use L2					
8. passive					
9. active					
10. enthusiastic					
11. self-correct					
12. take risk					

1 = never
2 = rarely
3 = sometimes
4 = frequently
5 = always

Teacher Language

The aim of the observation was to find out teachers' metalanguage. It meant teacher talk, the language of organizing the classroom to make the teachers' input more comprehensible. This included teachers' explanations, responses to questions, instructions, giving praise, and correction. (adapted from Nunan & Lamb, 1996)

Observation Scheme

Teacher Language	1	2	3	4	5
1. explanation 1.1 give information that allows students to discover by oneself rules and principles of language.					
1.2 reduce ambiguity of choice for learners					
2. response to questions					
3. instruction					
4. minimize teacher talk time (TTT)					
5. correction					
6. giving praise					
7. encourage students to communicate					

Learning Environment

The objective of observation was to refine the researcher's and the teachers' awareness of the environment which affects learners' learning. (adapted from Wajnryb, 1992)

Observation Scheme

Classroom Environment	1	2	3	4	5
1. the size of the classroom					
2. the seating arrangement					
3. the acoustics					
4. the teacher's behavior such as tone of voice, position					

Teaching Skills and Strategies

The objective of the observation was to raise awareness of the teacher's teaching skills. (adapted from Bilash, 2000)

Observation Scheme

Teacher's Teaching Skills	1	2	3	4	5
1.teacher talk 1.2 deals with feeling; accepting, discussing, etc.					
1.3 praise or encourage					
1.4 jokes; intentional joking/ kidding/ making pun					
1.5 use L1					
1.6 use L2					
2. build on what learners know					
3. breaking learning into small chunks					
4. require teaching/modeling					
5. activities are structured for success					
6. include individual/pair activities					
7. give easy instruction					
8. motivate learners to be involved in the classroom					
9. check for understanding					
10. psychologically safe					

Classroom Management

The objective of observation was to focus on (a) the organizational skills involved in the transition between activities, (b) characteristic of the teacher intervention during pair or group work, (c) and the management of information transfer. (adapted from Wajnryb, 1992)

Observation Scheme

Teacher's Classroom management	1	2	3	4	5
getting learners in/through and out of activities 1. moving-in phase 1.1 organizing groups and seating					
1.2 giving instruction including modeling and checking					
1.3 appointing and briefing group leaders					
2. monitoring pair/group work					
2.1 teacher's voice/position					
2.2 teacher's comment must be preceded by the teacher listening closely to the groups to find out how learners getting on.					
2.3 encourage learners to interact with member					
2.4 give equal time to groups					
2.5 give equal time to individuals within the groups					
2.6 proximic, eye contact and tone of voice in group work (different from those in full class activities)					
3.moving out of activities 3.1 winding pairs/groups down					
3.2 signaling for everyone's attention					
3.3 re-orienting group to new phase of lesson					

Appendix E

Letter of Consent for Director

Dear Director
As indicated in previous correspondence, I want to thank you for granting me permission to conduct an action research project in your school. The aim of this project is to adapt and implement a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes in the Thai context. To translate CLT from theory to practice I will use Bilash's Second Language Instructional Model (B-SLIM).
The study will parallel the annual planning cycle for the school and take place during three - month period from December, 2000 to February, 2001. Seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students, and four EFL teachers will be involved. Recorded data will be collected by observation of the researcher, through conversations, and by analyzing and interpreting student/teacher journals.
I would like to point out that all data related to the study will be destroyed when the study is concluded.
Please indicate whether you approve of your students and your teachers participation by completing the attached form.

Sincerely,

Thooptong Kwangsawad

_____ Yes, I give permission for conducting project.
_____ No. I do not give permission for conducting project.

_____
Signature
Dated at Mahasarakham University, Thailand, this_____day
of_____,2000.

Appendix F

Letter of Consent for Participants

Dear Research Participant:
You have been invited to participate in a qualitative action research project. The aim of this project is to adapt and implement communicative language teaching (CLT) to teach English as a foreign language (EFL) to secondary school student. To translate CLT from theory to practice I will use Bilash's Second Language Instructional Model (B-SLIM).
The study will parallel the annual planning cycle for the school, (approximately a three - month period from December,2000 to February, 2001). Recorded data will be collected by observation of the researcher, conversation, written journals. To collect data for analysis the participants will be video-taped, and photography will be taken during class. The only person to see the result of these technologies will be the researcher.
Please, note that you have the right to withdraw in whole or in part any of your contributions at any time during collection and review prior to publication without prejudice.
I wish to reassure you that I take seriously my responsibility for the confidentiality and anonymity of personal information. Therefore all references to individual and location, will be coded to protect student and teacher identities. These raw data will be destroyed when the research is concluded.
Sincerely,

Thooptong Kwangsawad.

I,_____agree to participate in the research study under the conditions as outline above.
Dated at Mahasarakham University, Thailand, this.....day of.....,2000

Research Participant

Appendix G

Letter of Consent for Parent

Dear Parent:
As a part of a classroom project, I will soon be conducting a study in your child's classroom. The project aims to adapt and implement communicative language teaching (CLT) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) secondary school classroom in the Thai context. To translate CLT from theory to practice I will use Bilash's Second Language Instructional Model (B-SLIM).
Each child's participation is voluntary, and so your child will be told that he or she does not have to take part. And your child has the right to withdraw in whole or in part of the project at any time during the data collection and review prior to publication without prejudice. To collect data for analysis the students will be video-taped, and photography will be taken. The only person to see the result of these technologies will be the researcher.
I would like to point out that all data collected during the different phases of the study will be destroyed when the study is concluded.
Please, indicate whether you approve of your child's participation by completing the attached form.

Sincerely,

Thooptong Kwangsawad

Child's Name_____
_____ Yes, I give permission for my child to participate.
_____ No, I do not give permission for my child to participate.

Parent's Signature_____
Dated at Mahasarakham University, Thailand, this_____day
of_____,2000.

Appendix G

Letter of Consent for Parent

เรียน ผู้ปกครองของ.....

เนื่องด้วยข้าพเจ้านางธูปทอง กว้างสวาสดิ์ จะทำการวิจัยในชั้นเรียนของนักเรียน ในความปกครอง ของท่าน หัวข้อวิจัยคือ การสำรวจความเป็นไปได้ในการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ โดยวิธีสื่อสาร (communicative language teaching) ระดับมัธยมศึกษา ในประเทศไทยโดยปรับใช้แบบการสอนภาษาที่สองของบีลาช (Bilash's Second Language Instructional Model)

ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้นักเรียนแต่ละคนจะเข้าร่วมด้วยความสมัครใจ นักเรียนจะถูกถ่ายวิดีโอและถ่ายรูปในชั้นเรียนเพื่อนำมาประกอบการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล รูปถ่ายและวิดีโอจะถูกทำลายเมื่อการวิจัยสิ้นสุด และในระหว่างการวิจัยนักเรียนมีสิทธิ์ถอนตัวได้โดยไม่มีผลเสียต่อนักเรียนแต่อย่างใด

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อโปรดพิจารณาอนุญาตให้นักเรียนในความปกครองของท่านเข้าร่วมวิจัยในครั้งนี้

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

ธูปทอง กว้างสวาสดิ์

.....อนุญาตให้ ด.ช/ด.ญ.....เข้าร่วมวิจัย

.....ไม่อนุญาตให้ ด.ช/ด.ญ.....เข้าร่วมวิจัย

ลายเซ็นผู้ปกครอง.....

วันที่.....เดือน.....พ.ศ.....

Appendix H

Handouts For Teachers

Lesson Demonstration

Activities	Teacher	Students
Input Grammar: Possessive pronoun	1.reviews the use of possessive pronoun.	1.listen to the teacher and ask questions for clarification.
Intake-getting it Activity 1-3 adapted from Winn & Olsen, 1982	1.gives each student one or more rods, only one color and asks they describe their rods. 2.circulates and helps students, as needed.	1.say a sentence while pointing. Model: Your rod is yellow. Mine are red. Hers is pink. His are light green. 2.Then another student tries; then change old rods for new, only one color to a student, and others try. Questions: My rod is yellow. What color is hers? What colors are his? 3.put his/her rods in a special place and says " My rods are in my hand. Where are yours? Are hers under the table?, etc.
Activity 2	1.gives each student a rod and asks them to do the activity. 2.circulates and helps students, as needed.	1.put a rod under and overturned box. The other should not see what it is. 2.The box is removed and students try to guess who owns the different objects. Model: Somchai, is this yours? Class do you think this is his?, etc.
Activity 3	1.give each student in the group a different colored rod and asks them do the activity. 2.circulates and helps students, as needed.	1.build a single structure with their rods. 2.take turns describing their rods. " Mine is one that is under the pink rod and next to the blue one." etc.

Intake-using it Activity 1-3 adapted from Baudains & Baudains, 1990	1.snips words from newsprint at random to make a collage. Different type faces and styles make a more interesting visual effect. 2.circulates and helps students, as needed.	1.make the short sentence (e.g This book is mine. That pen is yours.) Students can use only the words from the collage, and write it down. 2.make a sentence with one word more than the first sentence, and then to continue in their own time to make sentence one word longer than the previous one for as long as they can. A word which appears only once in the collage can appear only once in any sentence, but can be used in any number of sentences.
Activity 2	1.asks students work in pairs and create a role play. 2.circulates and helps students, as needed.	1.each pair writes a short conversation using possessive pronouns. 2.create a role play.
Activity 3	1.hands out pictures to students. 2.asks them describe their pictures.	1.look at the picture. 2.write sentences describing their pictures. 3.read their constructed sentences to the class.

References

Baudains, R., & Buadains, M., (1990). Alternatives. New York; Longman.

Winn, J., & Olsen, B. (1982). Communication starters. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Bilash's Chart of Criteria for Communicative Activities

Is the activity communicative?

activities	use authentic materials	student must use stretches of language	learn something more than vocabulary grammar	everyone must listen and talk	Interaction is necessary	thinking problem solving required	real life context	honest personal response	low risk high security	motivating fun interesting
getting it										
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
using it										
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Type	Likes to	Is good at	Learn best by
Linguistic Learner "The Word Player"	read, write, tell stories	memorizing, names, places, dates and trivia	saying, hearing, and seeing words
Logical/Mathematical Learner "The Questioner"	do experiments figure things out work with numbers ask questions explore patterns and relationships	math reasoning logic problem solving	categorizing classifying working with abstract patterns/relationships
Spatial Learner "The Visualizer"	draw, build, design and create things daydream, look at pictures/slides, watch movies, play with music	imaging things sensing changes mazes/puzzles reading maps, charts	visualizing dreaming using the mind's eye working with colors/pictures
Musical Learner "The Music Lover"	sing, hum tunes listen to music play an instrument respond to music	picking up sounds remembering melodies noticing pitch/rhythms keeping time	rhythm melody music

Bodily/Kinesthetic Learner "The Mover"	move around touch and talk use body language	physical activities(sport, dance, acting) crafts	touching moving interacting with space processing knowledge through bodily sensations
Interpersonal Learner	have lots of friends talk to people join groups	understanding people leading others organizing communicating manipulating mediating conflicts	sharing comparing relating cooperating interviewing
Intrapersonal Learner	work alone pursue own interests	understanding self focusing inward on feelings/dreams following instincts pursuing interests/goal	working alone individualized projects self-space instruction having own space